Cities and Civil Society

R. J. Morris

Since the 1980s, the concept of 'civil society' has played an important part in European, North American and wider international debates. The focus of these debates has been on the conditions which produce stable, pluralist liberal democracies.[1] Within this debate the ability of different societies to produce an active associational culture has played a key role, and this culture has been related in a variety of ways to the growth of urban places embedded in a market economy. This paper outlines the widespread and varied nature of associational culture in Europe. It seeks to establish an 'ideal type' of voluntary society based upon the 'subscriber democracies' of nineteenth-century Britain and relate this type to some of the key aspects of civil society theory. The subscriber democracy is then located in a periodization of English development which is then compared with a number of other European examples. Cities have always been noted for distinctive forms of social and institutional forms of organization. The fort, the market and the temple have been linked from the very beginning with urban and proto urban forms. In the medieval and early modern period the chartered corporation, the guild, the parish, the watch and the militia were the dominant forms of organization.[2] The modern period has seen the insistent spread of formal but voluntary associations which began in the urban places of Europe and North America.

It is worth simply listing a few as they existed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

> The Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne (1793)
> The Edinburgh Society for the Suppression of Begging (1812)

---

1 E. Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty. Civil Society and its Rivals* (London, 1994); Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, 1993), and idem, *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of the American Community* (New York, 2000).

2 Max Weber, *Economy and Society,* ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, vol. 2 (Berkeley, 1978), pp. 941-1006.

and the rather kinder Glasgow Poor Children's Dinner Table Society founded in the hard winter of 1891.[3]

In Belfast,

The Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick (1826)
The Natural History and Philosophical Society (1821)
The Ulster Book, Tract and Bible Depository (1815)
The Ulster Rifle Association (1829)[4]

In France,

The Industrial Society (Mulhouse 1826)
The Society for Music and Declamation (Besançon 1839)
The Emulation Society of the Jura (Lons le Saunier 1818)[5]

In the German University town of Marburg,

The Patriotic Women's Organization (*Vaterländischer Frauenverein*) (1870)
The Sharpshooting Club (*Schützenverein*) (1848)[6]

In Russia and the Ukraine,

Moscow Commercial Exchange (1839)
Moscow Architectural Society (1867)
Russian Garden Cities Society (1913)
The Kiev Literary Society was working in the 1890s and 1900s[7]

The purpose and variety was extensive. The industrial and commercial town of Leeds in northern England produced, amongst many others, the following societies:

---

3 *The First Report of the Society for the Suppression of Beggars* (Edinburgh, 1813); Eneas Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Town and County of Newcastle upon Tyne* (Newcastle, 1827); 598; Francis H Groome, *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland* (London, 1898), vol. 3, p. 141.

4 *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Post Office Directory and Official Guide* (Belfast, 1870); Jonathan Bardon, *Belfast, An Illustrated History* (Belfast, 1982); Alison Jordan, *Who Cares. Charity in Victorian and Edwardian Belfast* (Belfast, 1988).

5 Carol E Harrison, *The Bourgeois Citizen in Nineteenth Century France. Gender, Sociability and the Uses of Emulation* (Oxford, 1999).

6 Rudy Koshar, *Social Life, Local Politics and Nazism. Marburg, 1880-1935* (Chapel Hill, 1986).

7 Michael F Hamm, *Kiev. A Portrait, 1800-1917* (Princeton, 1993); Timothy J Colton, Moscow (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), pp.11-71.

Leeds Benevolent or Strangers Friend Society (1789)
Leeds Auxiliary Bible Society (1809)
Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society (1819)
Leeds Mechanics Institution (1825)
Leeds Temperance Society (1831)
Leeds Zoological and Botanical Society (1838)
Leeds Permanent Building Society (1849)[8]

The extent and variety of voluntary associations was so great that some form of definition is essential. As a formal social institution, the voluntary associations had a number of key characteristics. They were free of the direction and authority of the state. They were formed for a stated and limited purpose. They had formal and stated rules. The members could join and leave as they wished, without loosing occupation, residence or citizenship, provided they agreed to pay their subscription and obey the rules. In other words, the voluntary association had the characteristic of modularity. Joining and leaving involved the gain or loss of the privileges of membership, neither more nor less.[9]

Between 1780 and 1850, the Scots and the English perfected a form of voluntary association which exhibited many features of a pluralist open civil society and hence forms an 'ideal type' of voluntary association suited to the current debate, and which might be called the 'subscriber democracy'. The practice and culture of such societies is represented here by an annual report. These reports were not only a vital source for the historian but were a prominent item in the material culture of the societies. They embodied key aspects of the social and cultural relationships which gave meaning to the members of the societies. The example provided here was a report of the Edinburgh Lancastrian School Society for the year 1813.[10] [see figure1] Lancastrian School Societies were formed in many English and Scottish cities with the purpose of collecting subscriptions to provide education for working class children. This was a contentious activity which entailed the disputes and divisions of both class and religion. These were exactly the sort of disputes which 'civil

8 R.J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party. The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-50* (Manchester, 1990).

9 D.L. Sills, 'Voluntary Societies', *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, XVI, 1968, pp. 360-61; Kenneth Little, *West African Urbanization* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 85-102; Gellner, *Conditions*, pp. 129-36.

10 There are copies of these reports in both Edinburgh University Library and the National Library of Scotland.

society' needed to negotiate if stable social relationships were to be sustained.

The title page itself reveals many features of the 'subscriber democracies'. This is a fairly ordinary item of print culture, but the associations which developed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were heavily dependent on print culture and the spread, speed and cheapening of its products. The title of the association defined and bounded its purpose and announced the key relationships, that between the directors and the 'general meeting' and the appeal beyond that to 'the public'. The Directors accepted from the title page that they were responsible to the general meeting of subscribers, but also that they wished and intended to appeal to a broader social group for more potential members and supporters. The report was one of countless items of print culture which had contributed since the late seventeenth century to the creation and reification of 'the public'.[11] Finally the title page contained the apparently innocuous words, 'price one shilling'. This report was for sale in the market economy, it was not limited in its circulation to the members alone. 'Transparency' has become a central feature of the informed trust required by a stable civil society. In the case of the subscriber democracy, trust was gained, not only by the open relationship of the directors and subscribers in the general meeting, but also through the market to the wider social group, 'the public'. The report was in the public sphere. (See 'Report of the ordinary directors...' in appendix, p. 66)

Although there was great variation in the reports of different societies, there was a common underlying structure. A large portion of the report was a solid block of text with a number of common elements reflecting the relationships announced on the title page. The text gave a statement of the purpose of the society together with an account of activities over the previous year. The Edinburgh School Society report began

> The Directors of the EDINBURGH LANCASTRIAN SCHOOL SOCIETY beg leave to lay before the GENERAL MEETING a short statement of their proceedings in the discharge of the trust committed to them, since the date of their former report.

The word 'trust' was crucial. The Directors gained their power and legitimacy from the subscribers and not from their own individual social status or position. They reported the building of their school house on

11 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Translated by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, 1992); Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Massachusetts, 1994).

Calton Hill and again asserted the legitimacy of their actions in a specific way

> they are vindicated by the opinion of the public at large, who have taken a friendly interest in the establishment at large[...]

The Directors claims were also based upon the routines and rituals of management:

> [...] their Visiting Committee regularly enter into their minute book the observations which occur to them in inspecting the arrangements and management of the School, and as these observations are reported to the Directors at their monthly meetings, provision is thus made for introducing from time to time such farther improvements as reflections and experience shall be found to suggest.

These societies developed as proto bureaucracies with the defining features of record keeping and clear hierarchies of institutionalized authority. In part the model was that of the trustee bound by the legal document of the trust. In part the model was that of the directors of a joint stock company responsible to shareholders, but added to this was the drive for transparency and the support of the public. In part this support was sought as a basis of legitimacy and in part as a source of further financial support. The Society wanted to build a larger school with separate provision for the girls, and because they did not have adequate funds, 'they are forced to have recourse to the liberality of the public.'[12] Unstated here was the competition for funds with other voluntary associations, especially those involved in education. The ideological and religious contests to control working class education were not fought out as a contest for the monopolistic and prescriptive powers of the state but as a quasi market contest for the freely given funds of 'the public'.

The next element of the annual report were the 'REGULATIONS for the CONSTITUTION and MANAGEMENT' of the Society. These set out the object of the society and defined the structures of power, authority and responsibility within the society. (See 'Regulations for the Constitution and Management of the Edinburgh Lancastrian School Society', pp. 66.8.)

12 *Report*, 1813 p. 9

Like thousands of other voluntary associations, the Edinburgh Lancastrian School Society was a rule based society.[13] Its purpose was defined and bounded by rule one. The requirements of membership were defined in rule two. The educational conduct of the schools was limited by rule eight. Joining and leaving was voluntary. Those who joined knew exactly what they were committed to. This was quite different from prescriptive, ascriptive and particularistic categories such as 'German', 'a catholic' or 'a female'. Rules three to seven carefully set out the structure of authority. The Directors knew when to call meetings and the Treasurer knew exactly how payments were to be collected and sanctioned.

The next section reflected these rules regarding authority but named names, the office bearers of the Society. This was the point at which the egalitarian structure of the Society, one subscriber one vote negotiated with the very unequal structure of the hierarchical society of early nineteenth century Scotland. The authority of the local aristocracy, gentry, leading ministers of the Kirk and officers of local governance (Lord Provost and Lord Advocate) were gather in as President, Vice President and Extraordinary Directors, whilst those who actually did the work were listed as Ordinary Directors, Secretaries and Treasure. Gender also respected social hierarchy with the appointment of Patronesses of the Female School and Lady Visitors. However each name not as a direct result of the social status of the individual but was there because the individual had been chosen under the rules and the authority of the general meeting. The Duke of Buccleuch might have been the most powerful landlord in southern Scotland, able to dismiss tenants in their dozens, but he was at the head of this list because he had been invited by Directors elected by the general meeting. Perhaps the Directors were wise to recognize the social and economic power of the Duke, but none the less he was there by choice. This was the point at which the rational choice making culture of the middle classes met the prescription hierarchical culture of the aristocracy. (See 'Office Bearers of the Society', pp. 69-72). Here the social structure of Scotland, class, status and gender was laid out for the benefit of the School Society.

Last and in terms of importance by no means least was the published subscription list. By the standards of the late twentieth century, the publication of lists like this seems to be a distortion of the notion of charitable giving with its over tones of disinterested benevolence. In fact the publi-

13 John Breuilly, 'Civil Society and the Public Sphere in Hamburg, Lyon and Manchester, 1815-1850', in H. Koopman and M. Lauster (eds), *Vormärzliteratur in Europäischer Perspective I* (Bielefeld, 1996) draws attention to the rule based nature and openness of associations in three very different urban environments.

cation of this list was a form of double accounting. For those with the privilege of being able to give it was a public accounting of their responsibility towards 'the poor' which justified their privilege. In addition it was a public accounting between the Treasurer and his subscribers to show that the money had been properly received. A summary account of the revenue and expenditure of the Society at the end of the report completed this process.

Voluntary Associations were closely identified with the city and there are good reasons why this should be so. Here is Louis Wirth, theorist of urbanism in 1930s Chicago

> urbanites meet each one another in highly segmental roles [...] and are thus associated with a greater number of organized groups [...] The contacts of the city may indeed be face to face, but they are nevertheless impersonal, superficial, transitory and segmental [...]
>
> It is largely through the activities of the voluntary groups, be their objectives economic, political, educational, religious, recreational, or cultural, that the urbanite expresses and develops his personality, acquires status, and is able to carry on the round of activities that constitutes his life career.[14]

Voluntary associations work within the social relationships of the urban in two distinctive ways. They were a basis for experimentation and for integration.

First they were the basis for experiment in the rapidly changing conditions of urban growth. Early nineteenth-century Britain was deeply troubled by the growth of urban poverty. There was considerable tension between the dictates of political economy and those of Christian charity. The debate over state policy was long and divisive. Innovation was carried forward by bodies like the Benevolent or Strangers Friend Society, the Church District Visiting Society, the Public Dispensary and the General Infirmary.[15]

The associations also operated to integrate urban society. The alienation of the individual was countered by the ability to join with those of like culture, taste and interest. Those coming to Glasgow from the Scottish Highlands might join the Highland Society (1727) or receive help from the Highland Strangers Friend Society (1814). Others joined societies where members spoke the Gaelic language often in specific regional

14 L. Wirth, 'Urbanism as a Way of Life', in L. Wirth, *On Cities and Social Life*, ed. by A. J. Reiss (Chicago, 1964), pp. 71 and 82. The essay itself was first published in 1938.

15 R.J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, pp. 204-27.

dialects.[16] Language based societies were more common in eastern Europe. Kiev for example had societies which operated in Polish, Ukraine, Russian and the Jewish languages. Part of the history of cities was the growing specificity of such associations especially in areas of German culture.[17]

Associations might also operate to mitigate and negotiate group conflict. Thus the Literary and Philosophical Societies in Britain banned all discussion of religious and political matters which they knew divided their potential membership. This enabled a divided elite to work together on projects which united their interests, notably in cultural development. Some conflicts were negotiated through the setting up of several associations. The bitter and divisive British debate over elementary education for the working classes was one such issue. The conflict for control of state directed education led to stalemate, but matters progressed because such education was in the hands of the British and Foreign School Society, the National School Society and the rest. Bible and Missionary societies represented another form of conflict but again each denomination and group of denominations established their own society and the competition for funds decided the relative influence of each.[18]

There were good reasons why the voluntary association was linked to the growing towns. Size in itself meant that the town had the resources to support a variety of associations. A relatively small population was required to support associations of general interest like the Friendly Societies which provided a mixture of funeral benefits and sociability to their members, but a much larger population was required if the full range of educational and missionary society interests was to be economically and socially viable. The urban place by its nature created a variety of economic and cultural interests. These interests would cut across each other. Thus merchants and industrialists might co-operate in a Chamber of Commerce or in the Trade Protection Societies which gave information on the credit worthiness of potential customers, but they might wish to co-operate with their own religious group to promote education and missionary work and then with their own language or social status group for cultural and social activities. Urban places were also a focus for new ideas because they were the location for flows of information. Newspapers, books, visiting lecturers, libraries all arrived first and were more common in towns and cities. Thus innovations like the Mechanics Insti-

16 Charles W.J. Withers, *Urban Highlanders. Highland-Lowland Migration and Urban Gaelic Culture, 1700-1900* (East Linton, 1998).

17 Michael F Hamm, *Kiev*.

18 R.J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, pp. 264-79.

tutions started first in central Scotland. They were then in the early 1820s transmitted to London from where they spread first to major urban centres and then to small ones. The Society of St Vincent de Paul spread in the same way along the urban central place networks of Catholic Europe.[19] Finally the urban place produced a series of complex externalities which could often only be approached through voluntary collective action. The provision of special purpose public buildings was one legacy of associational culture.

In recent decades, voluntary association has been linked with a wider complex of social relationships often called 'civil society'. The concept of civil society has been criticised for being too vague and all encompassing, but the simple definition offered in Ernest Gellner's polemic is the most useful which identifies civil society with those social actions and relationships which lay between the tyranny of kings and tyranny of cousins.[20] With the help of such a definition it is possible to identify the historical development of an area of social action which is non prescriptive, in which the self directing, choice making individual can act free of the authority of the state or of family. There is no linear progress here. Many see the middle years of the 20th century as ones in which choice was limited by a belief in the virtues of a problem solving state, be it fascist, communist or welfarist.

For the historian who wishes to link the development of civil society and voluntary associations with the European city matters have become complicated by recent debates which have given civil society a central place in the development of stable pluralist democracies. Indeed theorists like Francis Fukayama see such societies as the inevitable 'end of history'. The claim is that societies with a free market plus pluralist democracy plus civil society will always 'win' despite temporary gains for authoritarian regimes of varying kinds.[21] Civil society has come to be seen as both a descriptive and a normative idea. Civil Society is clearly 'a good thing'. The argument has been taken further by the so called neo Toquevillians who suggest that societies with a history of an active civil society are those best able to sustain a stable pluralist democracy.[22] To simplify the argument, Robert Putnam suggests that voluntary associations, with the need to co-operate in order to sustain a bowling league, are the places where people learn to be democratic and tolerant. The existence of a civil society requires much more than this. The 'tariff' for be-

19 Work being done by Carol Harrison will increase our knowledge of this.

20 Gellner, *Conditions*, pp. 7-8.

21 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London, 1992).

22 Putnam, *Making Democracy Work.*

ing a civil society might include the following: The existence of a free market, of a free media (newspapers, public meetings, publishing) and the rule of law as well as the freedom to form voluntary associations.[23] These are all features which tend to be associated with the urban place, either as a community or as a central place. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith claimed that 'the inhabitants of towns [...] arrived at liberty and independence much earlier than the occupiers of land' because they had the privilege of magistrates and town council and the ability to make their own laws and establish the security of individuals through watch and ward.[24] Max Weber identified the pre-modern city with the 'associational cult of the burghers'.[25]

Although it was the experience of the United States which inspired de Toqueville, it was England that best exemplifies the depth, variety and dynamic of associational culture.[26] Peter Clark suggests that the first true voluntary society was the Antiquarian Society which met in 1586 in the Heralds Office at Westminster, but this is significant as the precursor of developments which were to come at the end of the seventeenth and start of the eighteenth centuries.[27] The uneven development of associational culture in England may be divided into three overlapping phases. During the first phase of proto civil society, associational culture was dominated by the club and the lodge. The original meaning of the word club referred to the action of a group of people who put money together for a common purpose, usually eating and drinking. By the late seventeenth century there was a wide range of clubs, political clubs, dining clubs, clubs to discuss matters of common interest. These expanded rapidly during the eighteenth century. The most important were lodge organizations, especially the freemasons and the friendly societies (mainly artisan groups for mutual insurance and sociability). In general this phase of associational culture was characterised by the limited openness of the associations. Entry was by proposer and seconder. Many would be entrants could be

23 John A Hall (ed.), *Civil Society. Theory, History and Comparison* (Cambridge, 1995).

24 Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Book III, Chapters 3 and 4.

25 Max Weber, *The City* , trans. with an introduction by Dom Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth (New York, 1958), p. 96.

26 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. by George Lawrence, ed. by J.P. Mayer, (London, 1966); R.J. Morris, 'Civil Society, Subscriber Democracies and Parliamentary Government in Great Britain', in Nancy Bermeo and Philip Nord (eds), *Civil Society before Democracy. Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York, 2000), pp. 111-134.

27 Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800, The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000).

'blackballed' by the existing membership. In many such as the freemasons entry involved elaborate and 'secret' rituals.[28] The true public sphere tended to be the open but disciplined atmosphere of the coffee house in which selected groups would meet informally at accepted locations to exchange news and opinion.[29] By the mid eighteenth century there was a scattering of open voluntary societies in which paying the subscription and obeying the rules was the only condition of entry. Religious missionary societies and the voluntary hospitals were the most common. Association in an open or partially open form became one basis for the development of an elite identity in English towns, through a sense of order, politeness, the separation of this elite from the common orders of beasts and men and the creation of an urban infra-structure which not only assisted this separation but also the accumulation of profits in the growing urban economy.[30] John Smail's account of Halifax, the woollen manufacturing town in northern England suggests that the open merchants' household was replaced by the joint stock association, the public meeting and the association at some point in the mid to late eighteenth century.[31]

The second phase was dominated by the elite male led 'subscriber democracies' which were discussed at the start of this paper. When set in the context of the growing towns they demonstrated a number of features. The most important was their openness. Joining was by paying a subscription and agreeing to support the rules and objectives of the society. The growth of closed clubs and lodges still continued but public life was now dominated by the 'subscriber democracies'. The rituals and practices of these societies set out a claim for legitimacy – the public meeting, the annual report, the publication of rules and subscription lists. The urban culture of print was vital especially the reporting in the newspapers. These societies were transparent and modular. Individuals could join and leave at any time. They were a part of cash economy pluralism. The unit for these societies was the urban place. Many in the earlier list were identified with a town or city. Some were independent societies. Others were branches of national societies. Taken together the leading societies were

28 R.J. Morris, 'Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites, 1780-1850', *Historical Journal*, 26 (1983), pp. 95-118; R. J. Morris, 'Clubs, Societies and Associations', in F. M. L. T. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 395-443.

29 Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York, 1977).

30 R.S. Neale, *Bath. A Social History, 1680-1850* (London, 1981); Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance. Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989).

31 John Smail, *The Origins of Middle Class Culture. Halifax, Yorkshire, 1660-1780*, (Ithaca, N. Y., 1994).

part of a conscious project to shape and re-shape urban social relationships, especially class relationships. The Leeds Building and Investment Society summed this up in 1846:

> Young men are especially recommended to join this society and thus lay the foundation of future comforts and ease. The Temperance Movement has removed temptation out of the way of thousands and the Mechanics Institutes and Reading Rooms have taught them many useful lessons. Let these advantages be further improved by securing a comfortable habitation. The means are in their reach and they are invited to embrace them.[32]

The third phase was marked by the spread of the voluntary association in its open form. There had been artisan and popular forms of voluntary association but these tended to neighbourhood based or at times semi secret and illegal. Indeed for a time between 1790 and the 1820s the British state had attempted to curb popular associations by law, and into the 1830s, by a tax on newsprint, an attempt to price a vital element of associational culture out of the reach of the working classes. In the second half of the nineteenth century trades unions became legal and were joined by a range of working class organizations which formed the elements of the twentieth century labour movement. The infrastructure of a popular socialism included the Clarion Clubs, the Socialist Sunday Schools, the Co-operative movement and the linked Women's Co-operative Guild. Political and class conflict was pursued by legal, public and transparent means in a manner which was quite different from the earlier period. In the early nineteenth century women had been systematically excluded from the public sphere. Voluntary associations provided a means through which a small portion of that public sphere was claimed. A split in the anti slavery movement in the 1830s was one of the first signs of this. By the 1860s women from the elite were engaged in a variety of educational and political associations. Especially important were associations for educating working class women in domestic skills.[33]

The success of voluntary associations drew upon a wide range of sources. These included

> guilds, corporations, charter bodies, parliaments [many practices of debate, appointed officers and chairmen came from these state agencies], clubs and lodges [again practices of order were often learnt here as well as respect for the chairman], the coffee house [openness, and the expression of opinion without violent conflict]

32 R.J. Morris, 'Clubs, Societies and Associations', p. 251.

33 R.J. Morris, 'Clubs, Societies and Associations'.

and finally religious congregations, especially non conformist ones which needed to co-operate for a common purpose, and placed especial value on transparency and trust in finances.

The contribution which the voluntary association made to the development of a pluralist liberal civil society has been explained in terms of the 'ideal type', the 'subscriber democracy' of late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Britain. This was not a form restricted to Britain but, the nature and impact of associational culture varied across Europe. There was indeed considerable variety within the United Kingdom. In Scotland, formal associations spread rapidly in the eighteenth century, especially in the major towns. After the Act of Union with England (1707) Scotland was left without its own state and hence associational culture expressed both national and local identities. A sample of Edinburgh societies from 1831 will illustrate this point:

Edinburgh Benevolent or Strangers Friend Society
Edinburgh Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick
Edinburgh Infant School Society
Edinburgh Bible Society
Scottish Bible Society
Scottish Missionary Society
Edinburgh City Mission
Scottish Society of Land Surveyors
Society of Arts for Scotland
Society of Antiquaries for Scotland
Anti Patronage Society of the Church of Scotland

In short associational culture provided Scotland with a form of devolution within civil society.[34]

Belfast deserves a brief visit for here was an active associational culture. Many familiar names were there, the Chamber of Commerce, Belfast Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick, the Literary Society, Belfast Classical Harmonist Society, the Northern Club and the Ulster Club, but this was an imperfect civil society with neither pluralism nor modularity. It was a society which was able to do little more than maintain an unstable equilibrium between contesting protestant and catholic sections. That being said, associational culture may well have contributed to the unnoticed achievement of Belfast Society namely the negotiation of the

34 Graeme Morton, *Unionist Nationalism. Governing Urban Scotland, 1830-1860* (East Linton, 1999).

tension between Presbyterian and Episcopalian elements of the protestant population, but perhaps that achievement can be labelled an over-achievement.[35]

The associational landscape in France and the German lands was very different. Both featured characteristic social clubs, which combined some of the functions of a cultural society, a gentlemen's club, reading room and library. Les Cercles or Casino, bodies like the Museum Club in Marburg organized balls and festivals. They were central to the social lives of males from the social group which they served.

The French had emerged from the 'revolution' of the 1790s with a deep fear of the disorder caused by associations within civil society. The result was a variety of changing curbs and controls from the state embodied in clause 291 of the Code Napoleon. This involved compulsory registration and a check on the rules and purpose of many associations by magistrates and prefects. Close scrutiny was given to masonic associations and the Society of St Vincent de Paul for networked organizations were especially suspect. This control did not result in suppression but a prolonged negotiation between state and civil society. Indeed many prefects recognized that it was preferable if an 'interest' was organized in a controlled way. Scientific knowledge as well as charity and leisure were particular objects of associations.[36]

German speaking cultures produced a distinctive and rich associational culture. Many emerged from the liberation from French control and others around the revolutions of 1848. Suppression in the 1850s was followed by an 1860s revival and then a period of considerable association building at the end of the century. The key feature here was the dominance of the gymnastics clubs, together with shooting clubs and music and choral societies. At the end of the century these were joined by a variety of patriotic societies as an expression of German culture. Two features stand out. These societies became increasingly particularist. In the lands to the east, there was less mixing with Hungarian and Slav peoples and an increasing exclusion of Jewish people. This was different from Mulhouse, where anti Jewish feeling was by no means absent but one society was mocked for excluding 'well brought up Israelites'. Secondly German associational culture proved increasing less able to negotiate the divisions within German society itself. Catholics, liberals, socialist and others had their own network of associations. This fractured associational culture did little to prevent the disasters of the 1930s and 1940s; indeed

35 Bardon, *Belfast* and Jordan, *Who Cares?*

36 Harrison, *Bourgeois Citizen.*

some claim that such a culture was a perfect base for the penetration of Nazi beliefs and activists.[37]

Russia and Ukraine need a brief mention. Here there was a shallow and fragile associational culture based in the towns which had neither motive nor ability to prevent pogroms against the Jews and other particularist activity. Such a culture collapsed rapidly in the face of the monopolistic state envisaged by the communist revolution.

The widespread significance of voluntary association in European Urban society cannot be in doubt nor can its variety of character and outcome. What does this experience say about the links between voluntary associational culture and the ability to achieve and sustain a stable liberal pluralist democracy? Clearly having lots of voluntary societies is not enough to sustain or create the 'historical path' to such a democracy. The study of England and the implied comparison with other cultures suggests a number of conclusions.

Style mattered as does the culture of associational practice. Transparency was vital. Secret societies made an imperfect contribution to a public sphere. The ethic of debate, of rational informed argument and a rhetoric of universality were also important.

The second conclusion addresses the so called historical path analysis. This suggests that societies with a long history of associational culture voluntary or otherwise build up an expertise in civil society which leads to pluralism. How far was England's success based upon a long history of independent corporations, guilds, dissenting churches and a parliamentary tradition of debate? Can the Netherlands tradition of 'pillarizarion' be derived from a history of corporate urban centres with their councils, guilds and watch and ward, a product of the needs of independent urban centres to co-operate against external threat? The most recent study by Robert Putnam suggests that northern Italy's open democracy derives from a rich urban commercial culture, whilst the failure of southern Italy to rise above client politics suited a society dominated historically by the absolute power of the Kingdom of Naples. This is fairly depressing as any

37 Koshar, *Social Life* and Elena Mannová, 'Ethnic Identity and the City' (Bratislava in the 19th Century), paper given to the Second International Conference on Urban History, Strasbourg, September 1994, and 'A Transition from Social to National Values in Associational Activity' (German Union Balls in Bratislava), *Journal of Urban Ethnology*, 2 (1997), pp. 49-55.

country which did not have a 'good' middle ages has probably missed out on stable pluralism.[38]

Equally depressing is the notion that multi ethnic, multi faith, multi language societies put grave difficulties in the way of pluralism. On the other hand, the history of 'pillarization' in the Netherlands runs counter this argument.

In all these cases the nature of bourgeois formation was crucial. The exclusion of Jews, of other language and religious minorities, the tolerance of pogroms and of ethnically based market imperfections, all sanctioned the loss of the liberal opportunity. The nature of bourgeois leadership was formative for civil society. This leadership needed the vision to incorporate itself in an inclusive manner or at least to leave social spaces for this inclusion to take place, in order that a stable civil society had the opportunity to form.

The social and legal spaces left by the state were equally important. In Russia, there were none. In the German states, these spaces decreased over the nineteenth century. Voluntary societies could not generate a civil society without an effective rule of law, nor could they provide the free public space for the generation of opinion and debate without the tolerance of the state. At the other extreme were stateless nations like Scotland in which the apparatus of the nation state was absent and the apparatus of dominance was imperfect. Here, civil society and associational culture developed as the effective embodiment of national consciousness.[39]

This paper leaves many questions unanswered but it draws attention to the vast task of mapping voluntary associations in a variety of European contexts. The analysis of multiple meanings of associational culture and the matching of the results against the ideal type can help to assess the contribution which the associational cultures made towards the creation of a pluralist and liberal civil society.

38 'Introduction' by Phil·Nord and article by Thomas Ertman in Bermeo and Nord (eds), *Civil Society*.

39 Graeme Morton, 'Civil Society, Municipal Government and the State: Enshrinement, Empowerment and Legitimacy, Scotland 1800-1929', *Urban History*, 25 (1998), pp. 348-67.

REPORT

OF THE

ORDINARY DIRECTORS

OF THE

EDINBURGH LANCASTRIAN SCHOOL SOCIETY,

TO THE

GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY,

HELD IN THE SCHOOL-ROOM, CALTON-HILL, ON MONDAY THE 11TH DAY OF MAY 1812.

TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED,

AN ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC,

&c. &c. &c.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY ALEX. LAWRIE & CO.

1813.

[*Price One Shilling.*]

REGULATIONS for the CONSTITUTION *and* MANAGEMENT *of the* EDINBURGH LANCASRIAN SCHOOL SOCIETY.

1. THE object of this Society shall be to facilitate the acquisition of the invaluable blessing of a good education, by establishing and supporting one or more Schools, as may be found necessary, upon the plan practised by Mr. Joseph Lancaster.

2. Subscribers to the amount of Half-a-Guinea annually, or of Five Guineas in one donation, shall be Members of the Society. But subscriptions, however small the amount, shall be gratefully received.

3. The business of the Society shall be conducted by a President, four Vice-Presidents, twenty-four Extraordinary, twenty-four Ordinary Directors, one or more Secretaries, and a Treasurer. These shall be elected by the Members, at a General Meeting, to be held annually on the second Monday in the month of May. One Vice-President, six Extraordinary Directors, and six Ordinary Directors, shall go out of office annually in rotation; and their places shall be supplied by vote of the Members at the Annual General Meeting. These may be again elected, after they have been a year out of office. The President, Secretaries, and Treasurer, shall hold their offices from year to year; but the same persons may be chosen to fill these offices as often

as the Members at their General Meeting shall think proper.

4. The Ordinary Directors, with the Secretaries and Treasurer, shall be a Committee of Management, which shall meet for the first year on the first Monday of every month; three Members, exclusive of the Secretary officiating for the time, and Treasurer, to constitute a quorum. They shall have the charge of the School or Schools established, direct the admission of Scholars, and regulate all matters relating to the ordinary administration of the affairs of the Society. They shall appoint two of their number in rotation to visit the Schools from time to time, and to report to the Monthly Meetings.

5. The Ordinary Directors shall call a Meeting of the Extraordinary Directors as often as they shall see occasion, and lay before them the minutes of their proceedings.

6. The Ordinary Directors, with the concurrence of the General Meeting, shall publish annually a report of the state of the Society.

7. The Treasurer shall be empowered to receive all sums of money paid for the use of the Society, and shall give sufficient security for the faithful discharge of his office. He shall make all payments sanctioned by the Committee of Management; lay before them at the first meeting in each quarter a List of arrears of Subscriptions; and prepare annually a statement of his

accounts, which shall be audited, balanced, and submitted to the Annual General Meeting.

8. The Scholars shall be taught Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, at such rates as the Society or the Directors shall appoint. No Scholars shall be admitted under the age of six years. No Books shall be introduced into the School which have not been previously approved by the Directors.

COMMITTEE-ROOM, CALTON HILL,
January 4, 1813.

THE Directors considering, that it might be of advantage to give to Subscribers to a certain amount the privilege of nominating a Scholar to be educated at the Society's School, free of Expense, resolved to propose to the next General Meeting of the Society, that this privilege should be granted to every Subscriber of TEN GUINEAS during life, and to every Annual Subscriber of THREE GUINEAS, during the continuance of his Subscription.

OFFICE-BEARERS OF THE SOCIETY.

PRESIDENT.

His Grace the DUKE of BUCCLEUCH and QUEENSBERRY.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

The Most Noble the MARQUIS of QUEENSBERRY.
The Right Honourable the EARL of SELKIRK.
The Right Honourable the LORD CHIEF BARON.
JOHN FRANCIS ERSKINE of Mar, Esquire.

EXTRAORDINARY DIRECTORS.

The LORD PROVOST, [1810.]
The LORD ADVOCATE.
LORD MEADOWBANK.
Sir WILLIAM FORBES, Bart.
Sir GEO. M'KENZIE, Bart.
Sir JAMES MILLES RIDDELL, Bart.
Rev. Dr. JOHNSTON.
Rev. Mr. ALISON.
ADAM ROLLAND, Esq.
RO. SCOTT MONCRIEFF, Esq.
JOHN WAUCHOPE, Esq.
JOHN CAMPBELL, Esq.
LORD PRIMROSE, [1811.]
Major MILLER.
FRANCIS JEFFREY, Esq.
HENRY COCKBURN, Esq.
HENRY JARDINE, Esq.
ALEX. HUTCHISON, Esq.
Baron Sir JOHN STUART [1812.]
Sir JOHN HAY, Bart.
ALEX. BONAR, Esq.
JAMES GIBSON, Esq.
JOHN WAUGH, Esq.
THOMAS DALLAS, Esq.

Ordinary Directors.

Rev. Sir H. Moncrieff, Wellwood, Bart.
Rev. Dr. Sandford.
Ninian Lowis, Esq.
Robert Forsyth, Esq.
John Arch. Murray, Esq.
George Ross, Esq.
Archibald Murray, Esq.
Dr. Thos. Cochrane.
Rev. David Dickson.
Rev. Andrew Thomson.
Robt. Plenderleith, Esq.

Alex. Cruickshank, Esq.
William Pattison, Esq.
Robert Dundas, Esq.
William Inglis, Esq.
Rev. Alex. Brunton.
James Bonar, Esq.
Crawford Tait, Esq.
Arch. Constable, Esq.
Thomas Allan, Esq
John Moncrieff, Esq.
Walter Brown, Esq.
James Robertson, Esq.

Rev. Dr. Fleming, & Geo. Lyon, Esq. W. S. } *Secretaries.*

William Braidwood, Junior, Esq. *Treasurer.*

PATRONESSES of the FEMALE SCHOOL.

Her Grace the Dutchess of Buccleuch and Queensberry.
Her Grace the Dutchess of Bedford.
Her Grace the Dutchess of Roxburgh.
The Most Noble the Marchioness of Queensberry.
The Right Honourable the Countess of Buchan.
The Right Honourable the Countess of Kellie.
The Right Honourable the Countess of Moray
The Right Honourable the Countess of Haddington.
The Right Honourable the Countess of Wemyss
The Right Honourable the Countess of Leven

The Right Honourable the COUNTESS of BREADALBANE.
The Right Honourable the COUNTESS of GLASGOW.
The Right Honourable VISCOUNTESS DUNCAN, (Dowager).
The Right Honourable VISCOUNTESS CATHCART.
The Honourable LADY HELEN HALL.
The Honourable Mrs. DUNDAS.
LADY BAIRD.

VISITORS OF THE FEMALE SCHOOL.

Lady Campbell of Ardkinlass.
Mrs. Fletcher, Castle Street.
Mrs. Ross, Howe Street.
Mrs. Hamilton.
Mrs. Campbell, Abercromby Place.
Mrs. Tait, Park Place.
Mrs. Inglis, Queen Street.
Mrs. Moncrieff, Dundas Street.
Mrs. Brunton, St. John Street.
Mrs. Yule, Nicolson Street.
Mrs. Borthwick Gilchrist, Nicolson Square.
Mrs. Duncan, Minto House.
Mrs. Halliday.
Mrs. Small.
Miss Erskine of Mar.
Miss Vans Agnew.
Miss Ch. Campbell.
Miss Graham.

	Donations.			Annual.		
	L.	S.	D.	L.	S.	D.
Baird, Robert, Esquire, -	1	1	0			
Baird, Thomas W. Esquire, -	1	1	0			
Balfour, D. Esquire, - -				1	1	0
Balfour, James, Esquire, -	1	1	0			
Baxter, Charles, Esquire, -				1	1	0
Baxter, Mr. John, - -				1	1	0
Bell, A. Esquire, - -	5	5	0			
Bell, George Joseph, Esquire, -	5	5	0			
Bell, George, Esquire, - -	1	1	0			
Bindon, Mrs. - - -	0	10	6			
Blair, Forbes Hunter, Esquire, -				1	1	0
Blair, William, Esquire, -	1	1	0			
Blackwood, Mr. John, - -				1	1	0
Bogle, Andrew, Esquire, -				0	10	6
Bonar, Andrew, Esquire, -	5	5	0			
Bonar, Alexander, Esquire, -	5	5	0			
Bonar, James, Esquire, -				1	1	0
Bradfute, Mr. - - -	1	1	0			
Braidwood, William, senior, -				1	1	0
Braidwood, William, junior, -	5	5	0			
Brewster, Dr. - - -				1	1	0
Brougham, J. W. Esquire -				1	1	0
Broughton, Charles, Esquire, -	5	5	0			
Brown, Mr. Samuel, - -	1	1	0			
Brown, Dr. Thomas, - -				1	1	0
Brown, Walter, Esquire, -	2	2	0	0	10	6
Bruce, Mr. Alexander, junior, -				1	1	0
Bruce, Mr. William, junior, -				0	10	6
Brunton, Reverend Mr. -				1	1	0
Brunton, Mr. George, - -				1	1	0
Buchanan, H. M'Donald, Esquire,				1	1	0
Buchanan, Reverend Dr. -				1	1	0
Burn, Robert, Esquire, - -				1	1	0