

*Sexuality as a “New” Social Issue*

Social changes in the last three decades remain phenomena to be analysed and conceptualised, as they continue in the direction of the neoliberal political and economic (dis)order. It is increasingly more obvious that the term comprises of a heap of meanings, but the “fall of communism” maintains being a kind of central point of reference. A special position of this point of reference should not be attributed to any big conceptual weight of it, but only to the fact that as the supposedly breakthrough event, it represents a manifestation of the unpredictability of “reality”. Other terms and notions from recent theoretical debates, such as all “post” phenomena are somehow legitimised through this complex event. The same goes for many speculations having to do with information and/or technology as well as for sociological explanations of shifts within the structures of societies. However, the epistemology of the social theories and sciences reflects their own “contamination” with the changes. This may be visible in a number of new concepts or old concepts with a new broader meaning, such as the notion of civil society. Jürgen Habermas observed some differences between the West and the East, concerning the notion of civil society:

*Radical democratic theories in the West were inspired by a semantic shift within the concept of ‘civil society’ that has taken place in the political self-understanding of dissidents. But one should distinguish between separate realities that exist here and there. In the Eastern Europe, I am afraid, the structures of civil society are so much a mirror picture of the panoptic State apparatus that they come forth in a phase of its havoc, but they disappear with its termination – almost in all cases. In the societies of the Western type new social movements have a different basis. They commence from other motives, they stand in a different context, and they have dissimilar aims since a dimension of liberties, for which they fight for in the East, is already attained here (Habermas, 1993: p. 119).*

This observation may be taken as generally true, although it succumbs to a bias where judgments of “higher and lower” development “phases” are all too quickly taken for granted. Quite undoubtedly, the two structures of civil society may not be too easily compared, but at the same time, it should be added that the demise of the civil society in the East sometime after the “fall of communism” gave place to a development of the political pluralism within the processes of a supposed construction of democracy. A