

THE
RESPONSIVE
COMMUNITY



RIGHTS *and*
RESPONSIBILITIES

Volume 5, Issue 2, Spring 1995

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Civil Society and the Rebirth of Our National Community

Any prescription for America must understand the advantages and limits of both the market and government, but more importantly, how neither is equipped to solve America's central problems: the deterioration of our civil society and the need to revitalize our democratic process.

Civil society is the place where Americans make their homes, sustain their marriages, raise their families, hang out with their friends, meet their neighbors, educate their children, worship their God. It is in the churches, schools, fraternities, community centers, labor unions, synagogues, sports leagues, PTAs, libraries, and barber shops. It is where opinions are expressed and refined, where views are exchanged and agreements made, where a sense of common purpose and consensus are forged. It lies apart from the realms of the market and the government, and possesses a different ethic.

The market is governed by the logic of economic self-interest, while government is the domain of laws with all their coercive authority. Civil society, on the other hand, is the sphere of our most basic humanity—the personal, everyday realm that is governed by values such as responsibility, trust, fraternity, solidarity, and love. In a *democratic* civil society such as ours we also put a special premium on social equality—the conviction that men and women should be measured by the quality of their character and not the color of their skin, the shape of their eyes, the size of their bank account, the religion of their family, or the happenstance of their gender.

What both Democrats and Republicans fail to see is that the government and the market are not enough to make a civilization. There must also be a healthy, robust civic sector—a space in which the

bonds of community can flourish. Government and the market are similar to two legs on a three-legged stool. Without the third leg of civil society, the stool is not stable and cannot provide support for a vital America.

Today the fragile ecology of our social environment is as threatened as that of our natural environment. Like fish floating on the surface of a polluted river, the network of voluntary associations in America seems to be dying. For example, PTA participation has fallen. So have Boy Scouts and Red Cross volunteers. So have labor unions and civic clubs, such as the Lions and the Elks. In the recent “Mood of America” poll taken by the Gannett News Service, 76 percent of those surveyed agreed that “there is less concern for others than there once was.” All across America, people are choosing not to join with each other in communal activities. One recent college graduate even volunteered sadly that her suburban Philadelphia neighbors “don’t even wave.”

Every day the news brings another account of Americans being disconnected from each other. Sometimes the stories seem comical, such as that of the married couple in Rochester, New York, who unexpectedly ran into one another on the same airplane as they departed for separate business trips and discovered that each had, unbeknownst to the other, hired a different baby-sitter to care for their young daughter. Often the stories are less amusing, such as that of the suburban Chicago couple who, unbeknownst to their indifferent neighbors, left their two little girls home alone while they vacationed in Mexico. Or the story in New York City of the murder of a young woman in a running suit whose body went unidentified, unclaimed, and apparently unwanted for a week before she was identified by her fingerprints as a New Jersey woman wholly estranged from her family.

It is tempting to dismiss these stories as isolated cases. But I think they have a grip on our imaginations precisely because they speak to our real fears. They are ugly reminders of the erosion of love, trust, and mutual obligation. They are testimony to a profound human disconnection that cuts across most conventional lines of class, race, and geography.

That is one reason, perhaps, that we love the television show “Cheers.” It is the bar “where everybody knows your name.” How many of us are blessed with such a place in our lives? How many of us know the names, much less the life stories, of all the neighbors in our section of town or even on several floors of our apartment building?

To the sophisticates of national politics, it all sounds too painfully small-time, even corny, to focus on these things. After all, voluntary local associations and community connection seem so peripheral to both the market and government, both of which have far more raw power. Government and business are national and international in scope. They’re on TV. They talk casually about billions of dollars. In many ways the worlds of politics and business have de-legitimized the local, the social, the cultural, the spiritual. Yet upon these things lie the whole edifice of our national well-being.

Alongside the decline of civil society, it is a sad truth that the exercise of democratic citizenship plays, at best, a very minor role in the lives of most American adults. Only 39 percent of eligible voters actually voted in 1994. The role formerly played by party organizations with face-to-face associations has been yielded to the media, where local TV news follows the dual credos, “if it bleeds, it leads, and if it thinks, it stinks,” and paid media politics remains beyond the reach of most Americans. When only the rich, such as Ross Perot, can get their views across on TV, political equality suffers. The rich have a loudspeaker and everyone else gets by with a megaphone. Make no mistake, money talks in American politics today as never before. No revival of our democratic culture can occur until citizens feel that their participation is more meaningful than the money lavished by PACs and big donors.

Then, there are the campaigns that politicians run which short-circuit deliberative judgment. People sit at home as spectators, wait to be entertained by candidates in 30-second pre-pollled, pre-tested emotional appeals, and then render a thumbs up or a thumbs down almost on a whim. Outside the campaign season, elected leaders too often let focus groups do their thinking for them. Public opinion does not result from reasoned dialogue, but from polls that solicit knee-

jerk responses from individuals who have seldom had the opportunity to reflect on Bosnia, GATT, property taxes, or public education in the company of their fellow citizens.

From the Long House of the Iroquois to the general store of Tocqueville's America to the Chautauquas of the late nineteenth century to the Jaycees and Lions and PTAs and political clubs of the early sixties, Americans have always had places where they could come together and deliberate about their common future. Today there are fewer and fewer forums where people actually listen to each other. It's as if everyone wants to spout his opinion or her criticism and then move on.

So what does all this imply for public policy?

- We need to strengthen the crucible of civil society, the American family. Given the startling increase in the number of children growing up with one parent and paltry resources, we need to recouple sex and parental responsibility. Rolling back irresponsible sexual behavior (sex without thought for its consequences), is best done by holding men equally accountable for such irresponsibility. Policy should send a very clear message—if you have sex with someone and she becomes pregnant, be prepared to have 15 percent of your wages for 18 years go to support the mother and child. Such a message might force young men to pause before they act and to recognize that fatherhood is a lifetime commitment that takes time and money.

And, given that 40 percent of American children now live in homes where both parents work, we have only four options if we believe our rhetoric about the importance of child rearing: higher compensation for one spouse so that the other can stay home permanently; a loving relative in the neighborhood; more taxes for more day-care programs; or, parental leave measured in years, not weeks, and available for a mother and a father at different times in a career. The only given is that someone has to care for the children.

- We need to create more quality civic space. The most underutilized resource in most of our communities is the public school, which

too often closes at 4:00 pm only to see children in suburbs return to empty homes with television as their baby-sitter, or in cities to the street corners where gangs make them an offer they can't refuse. Keeping the schools open on weekdays after hours, and on weekends, with supervision coming from the community, would give some kids a place to study until their parents picked them up or at least would provide a safe haven from the war zone outside.

- We need a more civic-minded media. At a time when harassed parents spend less time with their children, they have ceded to TV more and more of the all-important role of storytelling which is essential for the moral education that sustains a civil society. But too often TV producers and music executives and video game manufacturers feed young people a menu of violence without context and sex without attachment, and both with no consequences or judgment. The market acts blindly to sell and make money, never pausing to ask whether it furthers citizenship or decency. Too often those who trash government as an enemy of freedom and a destroyer of families are strangely silent about the market's corrosive effects on those very same values in civil society. The answer is not censorship, but more citizenship in the corporate boardroom and more active families who will turn off the trash, boycott the sponsors, and tell the executives that you hold them personally responsible for making money from glorifying violence and human degradation.
- In an effort to revitalize the democratic process, we have to take financing of elections out of the hands of the special interests and turn it over to the people by taking two simple steps. Allow taxpayers to check off on their tax returns, above their tax liability, up to \$200 for political campaigns for federal office in their state. Prior to the general election, divide the fund between Democrat, Republican, or qualified independent candidates. No other money would be legal—no PACs, no bundles, no big contributions, no party conduits—even the bankroll of a millionaire candidate would be off-limits. If the people of a state choose to give little, then they will be less informed, but this would be the citizens' choice. If there was less money involved, the process

would adjust. Who knows, maybe attack ads would go and public discourse would grow.

Public policy, as these suggestions illustrate, can help facilitate the revitalization of democracy and civil society, but it cannot itself create civil society. We can insist that fathers support their children financially, but fathers have to see the importance of spending time with their children. We can figure out ways, such as parental leave, to provide parents with more time with their children, but parents have to use that time to raise their children. We can create community schools, but communities have to make use of them. We can provide mothers and fathers with the tools they need to influence the storytelling of the mass media, but they ultimately must exercise that control. We can take special interests out of elections, but only people can vote. We can provide opportunities for a more deliberative citizenship at both the national and local level, but citizens have to seize those opportunities and take individual responsibility.

We also have to give the distinctive moral language of civil society a more permanent place in our public conversation. The language of the marketplace says, “get as much as you can for yourself.” The language of government says, “legislate for others what is good for them.” But the language of community and family and citizenship at its core is about receiving undeserved gifts. What this nation needs to promote is the spirit of giving something freely, without measuring it out precisely and demanding something in return.

At a minimum, the language of mutual obligation has to be given equal time with the language of rights that dominates our culture. Rights talk properly supports an individual’s status and dignity within a community. It has done much to protect the less powerful in our society and should not be abandoned. The problem comes in the adversarial dynamic that rights talk sets up in which people assert themselves through confrontation, championing one right to the exclusion of another. Instead of working together to improve our collective situation, we fight with each other over who has superior rights. Americans are too often given to speaking of America as a country in which you have the right to do whatever you want. On

reflection, most of us will admit that no country could long survive that lived by such a principle. And talk of this sort is deeply at odds with the best interests of civil society.

Forrest Gump and Rush Limbaugh are the surprise stars of the first half of the nineties because they poke fun at the hypocrisy and the inadequacy of what we have today. But they are not builders. The builders are those in localities across America who are constructing bridges of cooperation and dialogue in face-to-face meetings with their supporters and their adversaries. Alarmed at the decline of civil society, they know how to understand the legitimate point of view of those with whom they disagree. Here in Washington, action too often surrounds only competition for power. With the media's help, words are used to polarize and to destroy people. In cities across America where citizens are working together, words are tools to build bridges between people. For example, at New Communities Corporation in Newark, New Jersey, people are too busy doing things to spend energy figuring out how to tear down. In these places there are more barn raisers than barn burners. Connecting their idealism with national policy offers us our greatest hope and our biggest challenge.

Senator Bill Bradley

A Religious Conservative Agenda

After the Contract With America, religious conservatives have four major priorities for the new Congress.

First, government should be the friend rather than the foe of the family. At a minimum, this means that it should no longer undermine the values that we nurture in our homes and celebrate in churches and synagogues. The abuses of the National Endowment for the Arts are notorious and legion. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Legal Services Corporation cry out for budget cuts. It is unconscionable that in a

nation in which one out of two marriages ends in divorce, the government funds 200,000 divorces a year. It makes even less sense to provide massive subsidies to Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the Western world.

Federal cultural policy amounts to a reverse Robin Hood syndrome: robbing from the middle-class to give to the tuxedo and evening pumps crowd. A recent survey of contributors to WETA, the public TV station in Washington, D.C., revealed an average net worth of \$627,000. One in seven owned a wine cellar; one in three had been to Europe in the past year. If single mothers in the inner city must make sacrifices, let patrons of the arts sacrifice as well. Let Barney, that lovable Jurassic billionaire, get rich on his own dime.

Second, Congress should radically downsize government. Bill Bennett and Lamar Alexander, both former secretaries of education, have proposed abolishing their old department, eliminating 50 of the current 253 programs. An even more sweeping proposal is to take the \$33 billion spent at the federal level—70 percent of which never reaches the classroom—and give it back to the people in the form of block grants for school choice.

“A Bible and a newspaper in every house, and a good school in every district—all studied and appreciated as they merit—are the principal support of virtue, morality, and civil liberty,” said Benjamin Franklin. Today we deprive children of all three—and Franklin is given shorter shrift than the *Twist* or the *Hula-Hoop* in a new history course developed by federal bureaucrats. It is time to shift power and responsibility for educating children away from Washington and return it to local school boards and parents.

A third priority is to replace the welfare state with a community- and faith-based opportunity society. Since 1965 the U.S. has spent \$5.3 trillion on welfare at every level of government—more than it spent in 1990 constant dollars on World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. The magnitude of Great Society failures is staggering: multigenerational poverty, skyrocketing illegitimacy, and inner cities that resemble Beirut.

Glenn Loury, the brilliant economist from Boston University who also grew up in the inner city, observes that “in every community

there are agencies of moral and cultural development that seek to shape the ways in which individuals conceive of their duties to themselves...and of their responsibilities before God.” He adds that unless “these institutions are restored, through the devoted agency of the people and not their government, [it] threatens the survival of the Republic.”

These institutions—churches, synagogues, private charities—have eroded through decades of neglect. Mr. Lounsbury proposes rebuilding a nation of neighbors who redeem society through one act of kindness at a time. We must replace the pity of bureaucrats with the generosity of citizens; the destructiveness of handouts with the transforming power of faith and personal responsibility; the centralized scheme of the Great Society with the compassion of communities and charities.

The fourth and final priority of the new Congress should be to secure religious liberty and freedom of conscience for all citizens. Too often, a scowling intolerance greets those who bring their faith to bear in the public square. For people of faith the issue is much broader than voluntary school prayer. They seek to redress three decades of systematic hostility toward religious expression by government agencies, the schools, and the courts.

Religious conservatives will propose a religious liberty statute and constitutional amendment, modeled after the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, to guarantee that the right of all citizens to freely express their faith in public places is not infringed upon. Congress should codify in federal law what the Supreme Court ruled in *Tinker v. Des Moines School District* in 1969, that no child sheds his right to freedom of expression at the schoolhouse gate.

The purpose of this agenda is not to legislate family values, but to ensure that Washington values families. In many instances, these proposals will enjoy the support of deficit hawks and tax cutters, of religious conservatives and business groups. The differences between these constituencies are becoming increasingly blurred. A recent survey conducted for the National Federation of Independent Business found that 43 percent of all small-business owners are

evangelical Christians. Their concern is both the regulatory chokehold of the federal government and the coarsening of the culture.

Differences over issues like abortion will remain. It is best to acknowledge those disagreements forthrightly and discuss them freely while stressing unity on the broader agenda. If religious and economic conservatives can cooperate where possible and remain civil in disagreement, they will accomplish far more together than separately.

Ralph Reed

Let's Focus Our Moral Outrage

These days grown-ups piece together circumstantial evidence not to solve a double murder in Los Angeles, but to divine whether or not a Supreme Court Justice uttered the words “there is pubic hair on my Coke can.” Reporters garner from the fact that he kept his *Playboy* copies in the proper sequence signs of obsessiveness (librarians, take note) and indirect proof that he was given to kinky expressions. An FBI agent in Washington, D.C. was severely reprimanded for giving his son a ride to school in the official car, some seven blocks. (Little wonder no one had time to keep an eye on Aldrich Ames.)

In a society in which millions of children promiscuously copulate with children and sire children they cannot possibly take care of, we find the time and moral fervor to fuss about J. Donald Silva, a professor who used unchaste imagery in his English Lit class (something about belly dancing being like a vibrator under a plate). And the ancient English word for copulation was recently removed from the official Scrabble dictionary. Are we about to swing from a grave state of moral deficiency to an overdose of moralism, without even stopping to rest in some kind of a normal state, say somewhere near the golden rule? Or are we going to combine the worst of both worlds,

and continue to be engulfed by truly immoral acts—while we sanctimoniously rail about the moral equivalent of Trivial Pursuit?

Moral fervor can be a good thing, but we must learn not to squander it. Here are some suggested ground rules that might help. First, let's not seek perfection. The professor, public figure, CEO, or reporter who can always get it right has not been born yet. We each utter hundreds of thousands of words. We should allow people to occasionally put their foot in their mouth, pull it out, and walk on, rather than be crucified for an occasional slip of the tongue. Recently Sen. Conrad Burns was raked over the coals for saying, once, that living with blacks in Washington was a challenge. This certainly was not the most felicitous statement one can imagine, but let's keep some sense of perspective. Maybe we should introduce an annual boo-boo allowance.

Second, foul words should be accorded much less weight than misbehavior. Inquiring about the size of intimate parts of the anatomy is uncalled for; grabbing is a much more serious matter. If I traded the spell-check in my computer for a program that rejected "Dutch treat," "normal," and the other five thousand words the L.A. Times determined are politically incorrect, this by itself would hardly make me a good person.

Third, we need a moral equivalent to the statute of limitations. If we remember that only those who have never sinned should cast the first stone, we might be more willing to agree that if the inappropriate acts are not repeated, minor transgressions that took place umpteen years ago (say more than seven) should be expunged from a person's moral record. After all, even proven criminals are allowed to walk once the statute of limitations for their crime has been reached.

A fourth rule of thumb: A pattern of misconduct should be taken much more seriously than isolated events. Driving once under the influence is bad enough; we should be unabashed in the face of repeat offenders. (By the way, given that the average criminal commits several crimes before he is caught once, we should not consider "three strikes and you are out," unduly punitive. It actually amounts to "30 strikes and you are done.")

But even if repeated, not all misconduct should evoke the same level of concern. Parking in spaces designated for the handicapped is ill-considered, but leaving one's children unattended and taking off for Acapulco is much more condemnable. Those who repeatedly use their official phones to make personal long-distance calls, elected officials who ask their bodyguards to help their spouses with the shopping, and executives who pad their expense accounts—all these types should evoke less of a moral criticism than those who rob banks, block fire escapes, or sell bogus replacement parts to airlines.

Above all we should receive much more warmly those who repent, especially if the person restructures his or her life rather than merely expressing regret. Take Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros. He dropped his mistress, reunited with his wife, and returned, as far as the public knows, to the straight and narrow. He is now being hounded because it is said that he told the FBI that his payments to his mistress were \$60,000, while actually they may have been closer to \$200,000, and lasted longer than previously reported. "He lied!" cries the holier-than-thou crowd. I do not condone lying. But if only those who go through life without ever inaccurately completing a tax return, sales report, or news story would speak up, a stunning silence would replace the present choir for perfection.

If we keep stomping on anyone who misspeaks or commits the moral equivalent of jaywalking, we will have ever fewer people of stature willing to assume posts (such as mayor, corporate CEO, foundation head, teacher, etc.) in which they may come under public scrutiny. Much more important: We shall soon become exhausted from a moralistic frenzy in which no one is deemed above reproach. We shall then join the swelling ranks of cynics who believe that everyone is wicked and beyond redemption. We will then turn a deaf ear to the moral voices, believing them to be calls in the wilderness. Believing that we are surrounded by politicians who are crooks, doctors who are out to enrich themselves, and merchants who seek to exploit us, we shall ourselves feel free to join the immoral fray.

In order not to trivialize its moral voice, a community must focus its moral censure where it is most justified rather than taint everything with a broad brush. Maybe we should budget our expressions

of moral dismay, limiting them to, perhaps, 12 acts of censorship per annum. This in turn will encourage us to aim at well-chosen and deserving targets, of which there is no shortage at all. And hopefully we shall be able to increasingly express appreciation for those who act morally all on their own, setting a role model for others.

Amitai Etzioni

In November 1994, Francis Lawrence, President of Rutgers University, posed the questions, "Do we set standards in the future so we don't admit anybody? Or do we deal with a disadvantaged population that doesn't have that genetic, hereditary background to have a higher average?," to a small group of faculty during a two-hour question-and-answer session. A tape of the session surfaced in February 1995. Lawrence repeatedly apologized for his comments. For 30 years, Lawrence is reported to have been a particularly active advocate of minority rights, minority fellowships, and affirmative action. A broad coalition of students, faculty, and national organizations, African American and others, has continuously called for him to resign or be fired.

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FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY

Bowling Alone, Revisited

ROBERT D. PUTNAM

Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations. There are...a thousand different types—religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute....Thus the most democratic country in the world now is that in which men have in our time carried to the highest perfection the art of pursuing in common the objects of common desires....Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America.

Alexis de Tocqueville

When Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States in the 1830s, it was the Americans' propensity for civic association that most impressed him as the key to their unprecedented ability to make democracy work. Recently, social scientists of a neo-Tocquevillean bent have unearthed a wide range of empirical evidence that the theoretical premise of his argument is no less accurate today—that the quality of public life and the performance of social institutions (not only in the United States) are powerfully influenced by norms and networks of civic engagement.

In the field of education, for instance, researchers have discovered that successful schools are distinguished not so much by the content of their curriculum or the quality of their teachers, important as those factors may be, as by the schools' embeddedness in a broader fabric of supportive families and communities. The control of crime and illicit drugs is another arena of great practical concern in which

recent research emphasizes the importance of community norms and networks. The “community policing” movement rests on empirical evidence that informal social control can be more effective than formal law enforcement in reducing criminality and violence.

Urban poverty and joblessness are directly influenced by community norms and networks and “neighborhood effects.” Anne Case and Lawrence Katz, for example, found that controlling for all relevant individual characteristics (such as race, gender, education, parental education, family structure, religious involvement, and so on), youths whose *neighbors* attend church are more likely to have a job, less likely to use drugs, and less likely to be involved in criminal activity. In other words, churchgoing (the most common form of civic engagement in America) has important “externalities,” in the sense that it influences the behavior and life prospects of “bystanders,” whether or not they themselves are so engaged.

The economic importance of social bonds has also been demonstrated in research on the varying economic attainments of different ethnic groups in the United States. These results are consistent with research in a wide range of settings that demonstrates the vital importance of social networks for job placement and other economic outcomes. Meanwhile, a seemingly unrelated body of research on the sociology of economic development has also highlighted the role of social networks. Dense networks of collaboration among firms, and between workers and entrepreneurs, undergird successful industries from the high tech of Silicon Valley to the high fashion of Benetton.

Social epidemiologists have found that social ties have consequences even for physical health. People with few social ties face greater risks of illness and mortality, even controlling for socioeconomic status and for physiological risk factors. Joining, in short, is good for your health.

The norms and networks of civic engagement also powerfully affect the performance of representative government. That, at least, was the central conclusion of my own 20-year, quasi-experimental study of subnational governments in different regions of Italy. Although all these regional governments seemed identical on paper, their levels of effectiveness varied dramatically. Systematic inquiry showed that government quality was determined by longstanding

traditions of civic engagement (or its absence). Voter turnout, newspaper readership, membership in choral societies and football clubs—these were the hallmarks of a successful region. In fact, historical analysis suggested that these networks of organized reciprocity and civic solidarity, far from being an epiphenomenon of socioeconomic modernization, were a precondition for it.

No doubt the mechanisms through which civic engagement and social connectedness produce all these good things—better schools, lower crime, faster economic development, longer lives, and more effective government—are multiple and complex. While these briefly recounted findings require further confirmation and perhaps qualification, the parallels across hundreds of empirical studies in a dozen disparate disciplines and subfields are striking. Social scientists in several fields have recently suggested a common framework for understanding these phenomena, a framework that rests on the concept of *social capital*. By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—“social capital” refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

For a variety of reasons, life is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital. In the first place, networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust. Such networks facilitate coordination and communication, amplify reputations, and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved. When economic and political negotiation is embedded in dense networks of social interaction, incentives for opportunism are reduced. At the same time, networks of civic engagement embody past success at collaboration, which can serve as a cultural template for future collaboration. Finally, dense networks of interaction probably broaden the participants’ sense of self, developing the “I” into the “we,” or (in the language of rational-choice theorists) enhancing the participants’ “taste” for collective benefits.

I do not intend here to survey (much less contribute to) the development of the theory of social capital. Instead, I use the central premise of that rapidly growing body of work—that social connec-

tions and civic engagement pervasively influence our public life, as well as our private prospects—as the starting point for a survey of trends in social capital in contemporary America.

THE DECLINE OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION

We begin with familiar evidence on changing patterns of political participation, not least because it is immediately relevant to issues of democracy in the narrow sense. Consider the well-known decline in turnout in national elections over the last three decades. From a relative high point in the early 1960s, voter turnout had by 1990 declined by nearly a quarter; tens of millions of Americans had forsaken their parents' habitual readiness to engage in the simplest act of citizenship. Broadly similar trends also characterize participation in state and local elections.

It is not just the voting booth that has been increasingly deserted by Americans. A series of identical questions posed by the Roper Organization to national samples ten times each year over the last two decades reveals that since 1973 the number of Americans who report that “in the past year” they have “attended a public meeting on town or school affairs” has fallen by more than a third (from 22 percent in 1973 to 13 percent in 1993). By this and almost every other measure, Americans' direct engagement in politics and government has fallen steadily and sharply over the last generation, despite the fact that average levels of education—the best individual-level predictor of political participation—have risen sharply throughout this period. Every year over the last decade or two, millions more have withdrawn from the affairs of their communities.

Not coincidentally, Americans have also disengaged psychologically from politics and government over this era. The proportion of Americans who reply that they “trust the government in Washington” only “some of the time” or “almost never” has risen steadily from 30 percent in 1966 to 75 percent in 1992.

These trends are well known, of course, and taken by themselves would seem amenable to a strictly political explanation. Perhaps the long litany of political tragedies and scandals since the 1960s (assassinations, Vietnam, Watergate, Irangate, and so on) has triggered an understandable disgust for politics and government among Ameri-

cans, and that in turn has motivated their withdrawal. I do not doubt that this common interpretation has some merit, but its limitations become plain when we examine trends in civic engagement of a wider sort.

Our survey of organizational membership among Americans can usefully begin with a glance at the aggregate results of the General Social Survey, a scientifically conducted, national-sample survey that has been repeated 15 times over the last two decades. Church-related groups constitute the most common type of organization joined by Americans; they are especially popular with women. Other types of organizations frequently joined by women include school-service groups (mostly parent-teacher associations), sports groups, professional societies, and literary societies. Among men, sports clubs, labor unions, professional societies, fraternal groups, veterans' groups, and service clubs are all relatively popular. I want to emphasize that formal organizational involvement is not the only important form of social capital and civic engagement. In what follows, however, I rely mostly (though not entirely) on measures of civic engagement in formal organizations. The reason is simply methodological: For accurate, quantitative assessments of *change*—to move beyond impressions to quantitative evidence—we need data that have been regularly collected over a span of years, if not decades, and such data are for most part confined to formal contexts.

Religious affiliation is by far the most common associational membership among Americans. Yet religious sentiment in America seems to be becoming somewhat less tied to institutions and more self-defined. The 1960s witnessed a significant drop in reported weekly churchgoing—from roughly 48 percent in the late 1950s to roughly 41 percent in the early 1970s. Since then, it has (according to Gallup polls) stagnated or (according to polls by the National Opinion Research Corporation) declined still further. (Moreover, when one compares survey results with censuses of people actually in the pews, there are hints that the rate at which people exaggerate the regularity of their church attendance may be increasing.)

In short, the rapid expansion in evangelical and fundamentalist congregations has not fully made up for the hemorrhage in most mainline denominations. Meanwhile, data from the General Social

Survey over the last 20 years show a modest decline in membership in all “church-related groups,” including Sunday schools, Bible study groups, singles groups, and so on. It would seem, then, that net participation by Americans, both in religious services and in church-related groups, has declined modestly (by perhaps a sixth) since the 1960s.

For many years, labor unions provided one of the most common organizational affiliations among American workers. Yet union membership has been falling for nearly four decades, with the steepest decline occurring between 1975 and 1985. Since the mid-1950s, when union membership peaked, the unionized portion of the nonagricultural work force in America has dropped by more than half, falling from 32.5 percent in 1953 to 15.8 percent in 1992. By now, virtually all of the explosive growth in union membership that was associated with the New Deal has been erased. The solidarity of union halls is now mostly a fading memory of aging men.

The parent-teacher association (PTA) has been an especially important form of civic engagement in 20th century American society because parental involvement in the educational process represents a particularly productive form of social capital. It is, therefore, dismaying to discover that participation in PTAs has dropped drastically over the last generation. Adjusted for the number of schoolchildren nationwide, the proportion of American parents organizationally engaged with their children’s schools dropped by more than half between 1960 and 1976 and has hardly recovered since then.

The Solitary Bowler

Next, we turn to evidence on membership in (and volunteering for) civic and fraternal organizations. These data show some striking patterns. First, membership in traditional women’s groups has declined more or less steadily since the mid-1960s. For example, membership in the national Federation of Women’s Clubs is down by more than half (59 percent) since 1964, while membership in the League of Women Voters is off 42 percent since 1969. And women’s groups are not alone. Membership is down significantly in groups such as the Elks (off 18 percent since 1979), the Shriners (off 27 percent since 1979), and the Masons (down 39 percent since 1959).

Similar reductions are apparent in the numbers of volunteers for mainline civic organizations, such as the Boy Scouts (off 26 percent since 1970) and the Red Cross (off 61 percent since 1970). But what about the possibility that volunteers have simply switched their loyalties to other organizations? Survey evidence on volunteering has become available only recently and is plagued by changes in question format and by imprecision about what counts as “volunteer work”—should taking in the newspapers for a vacationing neighbor, for example, count? The best available evidence on long-term trends in “regular” (as opposed to occasional or “drop-by”) volunteering is available from the Labor Department’s Current Population Surveys of 1974 and 1989. These estimates suggest that serious volunteering declined by roughly one-sixth over these 15 years, from 24 percent of adults in 1974 to 20 percent in 1989. That means there are nearly eight million fewer volunteers nationwide in 1989 than in 1974. The multitudes of Red Cross aides and Boy Scout troop leaders now missing in action have apparently not been offset by equal numbers of new recruits elsewhere.

The most whimsical yet discomfiting bit of evidence of social disengagement in contemporary America that I have discovered is this: more Americans are bowling today than ever before, but bowling in organized leagues has plummeted in the last decade or so. Between 1980 and 1993, the total number of bowlers in the United States increased by 10 percent, while league bowling decreased by 40 percent. (Lest this be thought a wholly trivial example, I should note that according to the American Bowling Congress nearly 80 million Americans went bowling at least once during 1993, *nearly a third more than voted in the 1994 congressional elections*. Even after the 1980s plunge in league bowling, nearly 3 percent of American adults regularly bowl in leagues.) We are bowling by ourselves (or at least in informal gatherings). This rise of solo bowling threatens the livelihood of bowling-lane proprietors because those who bowl as members of leagues consume three times as much beer and pizza as solo bowlers, and the money in bowling is in the beer and pizza, not the balls and shoes. The broader social significance, however, lies in the social interaction and even occasionally civic conversations over beer and pizza that solo bowlers forgo. Whether or not bowling beats balloting in the eyes of most Americans, bowling teams illustrate yet another vanishing form of social capital.

A FALSE ALARM?

At this point, however, we must confront a serious counterargument. Perhaps the traditional forms of civic organization whose decay we have been tracing have been replaced by vibrant new organizations. For example, national environmental organizations (like the Sierra Club) and feminist groups (like the National Organization for Women) grew rapidly during the 1970s and 1980s and now count hundreds of thousands of dues-paying members. An even more dramatic example is the American Association of Retired Persons, which grew exponentially from 400,000 card-carrying members in 1960 to 33 million in 1993, becoming (after the Catholic Church) the largest private organization in the world. The national administrators of these organizations are among the most feared lobbyists in Washington, in large part because of their massive mailing lists of presumably loyal members.

These new mass-membership organizations are plainly of great political importance. From the point of view of social connectedness, however, they are sufficiently different from classic “secondary associations” that we need to invent a new label—perhaps “tertiary associations.” For the vast majority of their members, the only act of membership consists in writing a check for dues or perhaps occasionally reading a newsletter. Few ever attend any meetings of such organizations, and most are unlikely (knowingly) to encounter other members. The bond between any two members of the Sierra Club is less like the bond between any two members of a gardening club and more like the bond between any two Red Sox fans (or perhaps any two devoted Honda owners): they root for the same team and they share some of the same interests, but they are unaware of each other’s existence. Their ties, in short, are to common symbols, common leaders, and perhaps common ideals, but not to one another. The theory of social capital argues that associational membership should, for example, increase social trust, but this prediction is much less straightforward with regard to membership in tertiary associations. From the point of view of social connectedness, the Environmental Defense Fund and a bowling league are just not in the same category.

If the growth of tertiary organizations represents one potential (but probably not real) counterexample to my thesis, a second

countertrend is represented by the growing prominence of nonprofit organizations, especially nonprofit service agencies. This so-called third sector includes everything from Oxfam and the Metropolitan Museum of Art to the Ford Foundation and the Mayo Clinic. In other words, although most secondary associations are nonprofits, most nonprofit agencies are not secondary associations. To identify trends in the size of the nonprofit sector with trends in social connectedness would be another fundamental conceptual mistake.

A third potential countertrend is much more relevant to an assessment of social capital and civic engagement. Some able researchers have argued that the last few decades have witnessed a rapid expansion in “support groups” of various sorts. Robert Wuthnow reports that fully 40 percent of all Americans claim to be “currently involved in [a] small group that meets regularly and provides support or caring for those who participate in it.” Many of these groups are religiously affiliated, but many others are not. For example, nearly 5 percent of Wuthnow’s national sample claim to participate regularly in a “self-help” group, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, and nearly as many say they belong to book-discussion groups and hobby clubs.

The groups described by Wuthnow’s respondents unquestionably represent an important form of social capital, and they need to be accounted for in any serious reckoning of trends in social connectedness. On the other hand, they do not typically play the same role as traditional civic associations. As Wuthnow emphasizes,

Small groups may not be fostering community as effectively as many of their proponents would like. Some small groups merely provide occasions for individuals to focus on themselves in the presence of others. The social contract binding members together asserts only the weakest of obligations. Come if you have time. Talk if you feel like it. Respect everyone’s opinion. Never criticize. Leave quietly if you become dissatisfied....We can imagine that [these small groups] really substitute for families, neighborhoods, and broader community attachments that may demand lifelong commitments, when, in fact, they do not.

All these potential countertrends—tertiary organizations, nonprofit organizations, support groups, as well as newer forms of association, like neighborhood crimewatch groups and residential

associations—need somehow to be weighed against the erosion of conventional civic organizations. One way of doing so is to consult the General Social Survey.

Because educational levels are closely correlated with associational membership, and because educational levels in the United States have risen sharply over the last several decades, it is instructive to array the changes in membership for three broad educational categories—less than high school, high school, and more than high school. Within all educational categories, total associational membership declined significantly between 1967 and 1993. Among the college-educated, the average number of group memberships per person fell from 2.8 to 2.0 (a 26 percent decline); among high school graduates, the number fell from 1.8 to 1.2 (32 percent); and among those with fewer than 12 years of education, the number fell from 1.4 to 1.1 (25 percent). In other words, at *all* educational (and hence social) levels of American society, and counting *all* sorts of group memberships, the average number of associational memberships has fallen by about a fourth over the last quarter-century. Without controls for educational levels, the trend is not nearly so clear, but the central point is this: *more Americans than ever before are in social circumstances that foster associational involvement (higher education, middle age, and so on), but nevertheless aggregate associational membership appears to be stagnant or declining.*

Broken down by type of group, the downward trend is most marked for church-related groups, for labor unions, for fraternal and veterans' organizations, and for school-service groups. Conversely, membership in professional associations has risen over these years, although perhaps less than might have been predicted, given sharply rising educational and occupational levels. Essentially the same trends are evident for both men and women in the sample. In short, the available survey evidence, taking into account—insofar as respondents themselves consider the affiliations significant—tertiary associations, nonprofit organizations, various support groups, and any other groups that might have been missed by our organizationally targeted radar scope, confirms our earlier conclusion: American social capital in the form of civic associations has significantly eroded over the last generation.

FAMILIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS UNRAVELING

I noted earlier that most readily available quantitative evidence on trends in social connectedness involves formal settings, such as the voting booth, the union hall, or the PTA. One glaring exception is so widely discussed as to require little comment here: the most fundamental form of social capital is the family, and the massive evidence of the loosening of bonds within the family (both extended and nuclear) is well known. In addition to the century-long increase in divorce rates (which accelerated from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s and then leveled off) and the more recent increase in single-parent families, the portion of one-person households has more than doubled since 1950. These trends, of course, are quite consistent with—and may help to explain—our theme of social decapitalization.

A second aspect of informal social capital on which we happen to have reasonably reliable time-series data involves neighborliness. In each General Social Survey since 1974 respondents have been asked, “How often do you spend a social evening with a neighbor?” The proportion of Americans who socialize with neighbors at least once a month has slowly but steadily declined over the last two decades, from 61 percent in 1974 to 47 percent in 1994. (The same pattern is found among both men and women and at all levels of education. On the other hand, socializing with “friends who do not live in your neighborhood” appears to be on the increase, a trend that may reflect the growth of workplace-based social connections.) In the harried and sometimes menacing worlds in which we now live, few of us spend the time playing bridge with neighbors or chatting over the back fence that our parents did.

Americans are also less trusting. The proportion of Americans saying that most people can be trusted fell by two-fifths between 1960, when 58 percent chose that alternative, and 1994, when only 35 percent did. The same trend is apparent in all educational groups; indeed, because social trust is also correlated with education and because educational levels have risen sharply, the overall decrease in social trust is even more apparent if we control for education.

From the point of view of civic life, this erosion in social trust may be even more significant than the decline in organizational involve-

ment already documented. Eric Uslaner has shown that people who are trusting are more optimistic about the future, more altruistic, more likely to contribute to charity, to volunteer their time, to entertain strangers in their home, to work on community problems, to vote, and to be willing to serve on a jury. They are more tolerant of social and political minorities and more accepting of differing lifestyles, but also more critical of political correctness. Unfortunately, there are fewer and fewer Americans like that. A world in which we distrust one another is a world in which social collaboration seems a bad gamble, a world in which democracy itself is less safe.

Our discussion of trends in social connectedness and civic engagement has tacitly assumed that all the forms of social capital that we have discussed are themselves coherently correlated across individuals. This is in fact true. Members of associations are much more likely than nonmembers to participate in politics, to spend time with neighbors, to express social trust, and so on.

The close correlation between social trust and associational membership is true not only across time and across individuals, but also across countries. Evidence that Ronald Inglehart has gathered shows that, across the 35 countries he looks at, social trust and civic engagement are strongly correlated; the greater the density of associational membership in a society, the more trusting its citizens. Trust and engagement are two facets of the same underlying factor—social capital.

CAUSES OF COMMUNITY DECLINE

As we have seen, something has happened in the United States in the last two or three decades to diminish civic engagement and social connectedness. What could that “something” be? Here are several possible explanations, along with some initial evidence on each.

The movement of women into the labor force. Over these same two or three decades, many millions of American women have moved out of the home into paid employment. This is the primary, though not the sole, reason why the weekly working hours of the average American have increased significantly during these years. It seems highly plausible that this social revolution should have reduced the time and

energy available for building social capital. For certain organizations, such as the PTA, the League of Women Voters, the Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Red Cross, this is almost certainly an important part of the story. The sharpest decline in women's civic participation seems to have come in the 1970s; membership in such "women's" organizations as these has been virtually halved since the late 1960s. By contrast, most of the decline in participation in men's organizations occurred about ten years later; the total decline to date has been approximately 25 percent for the typical organization. On the other hand, the survey data imply that the aggregate declines for men are virtually as great as those for women. It is logically possible, of course, that the male declines might represent the knock-on effect of women's liberation, as dishwashing crowded out the lodge, but time-budget studies suggest that most husbands of working wives have assumed only a minor part of the housework. Moreover, preliminary analysis suggests that the fall-off in associational membership is as great among housewives as among working women. In fact, the greatest relative declines in PTA membership, for example, seem to have occurred among married mothers who do *not* work outside the home. In short, something besides the women's revolution seems to lie behind the erosion of social capital.

Mobility: The "re-potting" hypothesis. Numerous studies have shown that residential stability and such related phenomena as homeownership are clearly associated with greater civic engagement. Mobility, like frequent re-potting of plants, tends to disrupt root systems, and it takes time for an uprooted individual to put down new roots. It seems plausible that the automobile, suburbanization, and the movement to the Sun Belt have reduced the social rootedness of the average American, but one fundamental difficulty with this hypothesis is apparent: the best evidence shows that residential stability and homeownership in the United States have risen modestly since 1965, and are surely higher now than during the 1950s, when civic engagement and social connectedness by our measures was definitely higher.

Other demographic transformations. A range of additional changes have transformed the American family since the 1960s—fewer marriages, more divorces, fewer children, lower real wages, and so on. Each of these changes might account for some of the slackening of

civic engagement, since married, middle-class parents are generally more socially involved than other people. Moreover, the changes in scale that have swept over the American economy in these years—illustrated by the replacement of the corner grocery by the supermarket and now perhaps of the supermarket by electronic shopping at home, or the replacement of community-based enterprises by outposts of distant multinational firms—may perhaps have undermined the material and even physical basis for civic engagement.

The technological transformation of leisure. There is reason to believe that deep-seated technological trends are radically “privatizing” or “individualizing” our use of leisure time and thus disrupting many opportunities for social-capital formation. The most obvious and probably the most powerful instrument of this revolution is television. Time-budget studies in the 1960s showed that the growth in time spent watching television dwarfed all other changes in the way Americans passed their days and nights. Television has made our communities (or, rather, what we experience as our communities) wider and shallower. Rather than playing football on weekends, we watch other people play it half a continent away. Rather than confide in close friends, we watch Oprah discuss astonishingly intimate matters with total strangers on TV.

This same reasoning extends to other technologies. The compact disc and the Walkman, for example, enable us to receive musical entertainment in total privacy. In the language of economics, electronic technology enables individual tastes to be satisfied more fully, but at the cost of positive social externalities. The same logic that applied to the replacement of vaudeville by the movies now applies to the replacement of movies by the VCR. The new “virtual reality” helmets that we will soon don to be entertained in total isolation are merely the latest extension of this trend. Technology seems thus to be driving a wedge between our individual interests and our collective interests.

A MEASURED RESPONSE

The last refuge of a social-scientific scoundrel is to call for more research. Nevertheless, I cannot forbear from suggesting some further lines of inquiry.

- We must sort out what types of organizations and networks most effectively embody—or generate—social capital, in the sense of mutual reciprocity, the resolution of dilemmas of collective action, and the broadening of social identities. An important consideration must be the *distribution* of the networks: More diverse and encompassing networks are especially important for binding society together. Perhaps the most menacing social phenomenon in the United States today is this: the paucity of social capital that *bridges* the deepest cleavages in our society, particularly the racial divide.
- Another set of important issues involves broader crosscurrents that might intersect with the trends described here. What will be the impact, for example, of electronic networks on social capital? My hunch is that meeting in an electronic forum is not the equivalent of meeting in a bowling alley—or even in a saloon—but hard empirical research is needed. What about the development of social capital in the workplace? Is it growing while civic engagement declines, reflecting some social analogue of the first law of thermodynamics—social capital is neither created nor destroyed, merely redistributed? Or do the trends described in this essay represent a net loss?
- A rounded assessment of changes in American social capital over the last quarter-century needs to count the costs as well as the benefits of community engagement. We must not romanticize small-town, middle-class civic life in the America of the 1950s. In addition to the deleterious trends emphasized in this essay, recent decades have witnessed a substantial decline in intolerance and probably also in overt discrimination, and those beneficent trends may be related in complex ways to the erosion of traditional social capital. Moreover, a balanced accounting of the social-capital books would need to take into account the fact that closely-knit social, economic, and political organizations are unfortunately prone to corruption.
- Finally, and most urgently, we need to explore creatively how public policy impinges on social-capital formation. In some well-known instances, public policy has destroyed highly effective social networks and norms. American slum-clearance policy of

the 1950s and 1960s, for example, renovated physical capital, but at a very high cost to existing social capital. The consolidation of country post offices and small school districts has promised administrative and financial efficiencies, but full-cost accounting for the effects of these policies on social capital might produce a more negative verdict. On the other hand, such past initiatives as the county agricultural-agent system, community colleges, and tax deductions for charitable contributions illustrate that government can encourage social-capital formation. Even a recent proposal in San Luis Obispo, California, to require that all new houses have front porches, illustrates the power of government to influence where and how networks are formed. Education is another important means of social capital creation, and educators at all levels ought to make increased civic engagement a high priority. The recent national service initiative is an important first step.

It is one of history's real ironies that at the very moment when liberal democracy has swept the battlefield, both ideologically and geopolitically, growing numbers of citizens here at home are questioning the effectiveness of our public institutions. In the United States, at least, there is reason to suspect that this democratic disarray is linked to a broad erosion of civic engagement that began a quarter-century ago.

Political philosophers nowadays are much preoccupied with what they term "deliberative democracy," in which public policy emerges from a civic conversation. Deliberation of this sort requires that we know one another well enough to weigh one another's views. Deliberative democracy is not merely about expressing opinions, and it is undermined by anonymity and incivility. It requires that we take responsibility for our own views and test them in give-and-take with others who take us seriously. In this sense, "Ted from Toledo" style talk-shows undermine deliberative democracy, while weekly conversations on bowling teams (as well as other, more elevated forms of social capital) can contribute to it. High on America's agenda should be the question of how to reverse the adverse trends in social connectedness I have described, thus restoring civic engagement and civic trust.

A Critique of Mixed Income Housing: The Problems with "Gatreaux"

HOWARD HUSOCK

The Republican-inspired reexamination of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) raises fundamental questions concerning the relationship between housing policy and community integrity. Should we, as a matter of public policy, promote the integration of poor people into middle-class neighborhoods in an effort to achieve socioeconomic diversity? Or should we allow our practice of socioeconomic stratification to continue? Siding in favor of integration, the Clinton administration has proposed expanding the use of vouchers issued to tenants. Vouchers allow recipients to either remain in public housing or seek residence in other socioeconomic neighborhoods.

There is a deceptive appeal to such a program. Public housing bureaucracies are not popular even among low-income housing advocates; forcing them to compete seems like an incontrovertible good. But the Clinton plan is based, in part, on what the administration has viewed as the success of the Gatreaux project—a Chicago-based program that relocates families receiving rent subsidies from inner-city projects to suburban neighborhoods. Unfortunately, expansion of such an initiative—which the administration embraced even before the Republican victory in November—has its own serious risks and carries the potential for a political backlash.

At first glance, the Gatreaux project appears to offer nothing less than equity, previously and improperly denied. It does so by relocating minority (generally African-American) families, caught in underclass ghettos, to relatively more affluent, suburban communities—built, at least to judge by the fact that they are predominantly white, on a history of exclusion. This relocation offers families, primarily single mothers and children, a kind of rescue. They are

freed from the omnipresent fear of crime and are able to avail themselves of the schools, parks, summer jobs, and other benefits that come with life in jurisdictions with effective governments, law-abiding citizens, and good public education.

This sort of redress is powerfully suggested by the situation in many metropolitan areas where some citizens, mainly from racial minority groups, live in abject and dangerous conditions while others, generally white, live in prosperous and separate municipalities. “Spatial separation” is the phrase adopted by HUD to describe this situation; “American apartheid” is the phrase of sociologists Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton in their book of that title. Both clearly suggest exclusivity. Gatreaux was designed to provide a ladder to carry the unjustly excluded above walls that must come down.

Of course, no one can expect Gatreaux and similar programs to proceed without resistance. But, from the point of view of proponents, the resistance of those communities that would host the Gatreaux participants is merely proof of the justness of the cause. Those who would rescue the poor through relocation see, in resistance, proof of continued racism, of unwillingness or inability to appreciate the pleasures of communities diverse in both race and economic class. In short, resistance appears synonymous with narrow-mindedness and bigotry, qualities which should deservedly be targeted for public action. “We risk a societal collapse,” HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros has warned, “if we tolerate racism and the economic isolation of millions of people.”

And yet as one who very much empathizes with and supports the aspirations of the poor and seeks an end to racial division, I cannot help but see folly in Gatreaux—a folly based in both practical and philosophical flaws. Gatreaux, in its zeal to right ostensible racial and economic wrongs, ignores what Americans view as the legitimate basis of their communities: neighborhoods that both represent the fruits of citizens’ individual and collective struggles and also serve as vehicles for continued improvement in their condition. In addition, Gatreaux overlooks the possibilities for helping to forge new communities which can serve far larger numbers of the minority poor in their quest for a better life—and can do so without arousing the inevitable

and fierce resistance that Gatreaux inspires. The greatest tragedy of Gatreaux and related “mixed-income” strategies is not so much the problems they pose for the middle and upper classes, but the long-term harm such programs will inflict on their hoped-for beneficiaries.

HOUSING AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE: THE UNWRITTEN RULES

To understand the misguidedness of Gatreaux, one must look first at what might be called the unwritten rules of the American system of housing and community formation—rules which, though not often stated, exert a powerful hold on the citizenry. Americans have formed communities at dozens of different income levels, each representing a rung on what can be called the housing ladder. There is, to be sure, a range of income levels at any given rung—but few neighborhoods encompass income extremes. The rungs, moreover, have social as well as economic significance. Americans believe that one (or one’s family over time) works one’s way from the modest to the more affluent, from the rowhouse to the duplex, from apartment to condominium, from the two-family to the single-family, from city to suburb.

It is a value system which can be quantified. The geographer Phillip Rees, in his 1979 book *Residential Patterns in American Cities*, found that more than any other factor the common variable in American residential communities is social class, as defined particularly by income and educational attainment. In examining 13 U.S. metropolitan areas Rees found that “socioeconomic status is a *universal sorting principle* in American cities....People of like social rank tend to live together and apart from those of unlike rank.” (emphasis added)

Rees can be said, in effect, to have quantified the 1961 observations of one of the deans of American sociology, Herbert Gans. Gans, commenting on public policy efforts to ensure income mixing in residential communities, urged caution, noting that American suburbs were arranged largely on the basis of income and age and that these commonalities, rather than being somehow coincidental, were prerequisites for friendly relations among residents. In his classic

essay, "The Balanced Community: Homogeneity or Heterogeneity in Residential Areas?" Gans wrote:

A mixing of all age and class groups is likely to produce at best a polite but cool social climate, lacking the consensus and intensity of relations that is necessary for mutual enrichment. Instances of conflict are as probable as those of cooperation.

Conversely, Gans found that once neighbors can be spared the tensions that come from extremes of social class difference (e.g., jealousies and fears that arise from such factors as differences in child-rearing techniques or educational goals), they can, ironically, be freed to be tolerant. Even though suburbs might be economically homogeneous, they are far more ethnically heterogeneous than the urban neighborhoods that residents have left behind.

The Levittowns of the nation, according to Gans, were great engines of mixing, allowing what had been separate waves of immigrants to form new, heterogeneous communities behind the little varying facades of what cultural critics derided as "little boxes made of ticky tacky." In examining Levittown, New Jersey—among the quintessential postwar suburbs—Gans observed, "The fact that most people were similar enough in age and, to a lesser extent, income, enabled them to become friendly with people of different occupations, religions, ethnic backgrounds, or regional origins for the first time in their lives." (This openness did not at first, it must be noted, extend to blacks.) Far from being an instrument of exclusivity, then, the formation of community in what might be called socioeconomic comfort zones can allow other forms of mixture to occur.

Such, then, are the informal rules of American housing and social structure. Individual neighborhoods represent rungs on a socioeconomic ladder. Individuals find common bonds in their socioeconomic status and attempt to either remain comfortably on a specific rung or climb to higher rungs. Successfully forging and preserving communities is a means for individuals both to enjoy life and to advance socioeconomically. Well-maintained communities offer the chance for resale of homes at higher value, gains that can help leverage the purchase of homes in more affluent communities. The fact that effort, risk, and reward or failure can influence (though they're clearly not the only determinants of) one's place on this housing/community ladder provides legitimacy to the system.

HOW GATREAUX BREAKS THE "RULES"

It is quickly evident that Gatreaux-type policies stand these housing/community structure "rules" on their head. Gatreaux is meant to allow favored families to, in effect, leapfrog up the housing ladder, not by dint of thrift and effort but because of the twin qualifications of race and minimal income. The perverse effects are many. First, there will inevitably arise what might be called the "unjust reward" reaction: If I worked to get here, why should my neighbor's rent be paid by the government?

Beyond such economic complaints, income mixing can be, ironically, a recipe for racial backlash. If ever there was a group that needed the kind of protection that Gans claimed economic homogeneity provides, it is African-Americans. It is a sad but undeniable fact of American culture that racial heterogeneity is the hardest for white families to accept. Holding economics constant—i.e., awaiting racial integration through the diffusion of blacks into communities in which they can afford to live—while steadfastly enforcing nondiscrimination laws, is the surest way for racial division to blur, over time. Gatreaux moves in a far riskier direction because it asks whites to accept as neighbors those whom, in Gans's model, they would be uncomfortable with even if the new neighbors were white. That they are black and poor is the worst way to seek to end one of Cisneros's scourges: racial isolation.

Such a measure to move black families to the suburbs might be justified if there were evidence that African-Americans are not filtering out of the central city as they become middle class in larger numbers. But the evidence is just the opposite. Major new waves of black middle-class families have arrived in suburban Washington, D.C. (Prince George's County, Maryland), Atlanta (Fulton County), Cleveland (Shaker Heights), New York (Westchester, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties), and elsewhere. Richard Nathan of the State University of New York at Albany's Rockefeller Institute has highlighted these as "zones of emergence," which he has described as the underappreciated "flip side of the underclass." In the suburban-style New York borough of Queens, household income for black families in which both husband and wife are present now exceeds its white counterpart.

These upwardly mobile families of color not only are not helped by Gatreaux-type policies, they are threatened. By continuing to confuse race and class—as the Cisneros observation about racial and economic isolation indicates—Gatreaux invites whites to do the same, thus associating any black presence with a lower-class presence. In a sense, this concern is a corollary of concern about affirmative action—that by rewarding poor African-American families through state action solely on the basis of their identities, the achievements of striving black families are undermined. This would be equally true, it's worth noting, whether poor black families are moved into middle-class white or middle-class black neighborhoods. Because African-Americans are relatively new to the middle class, they must be especially concerned about consolidating their economic gains—i.e., realizing an appreciation in the value of their property based on the establishment of safe, successful communities. The insertion of lower-class elements in their midst could introduce into the middle-class communities the very kind of behaviors that the emergent middle class has worked hard to escape.

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF THE POOR

It is not enough, however, to understand the problems with Gatreaux from the perspective of those from middle- and upper-income communities. Cisneros, Massey, Denton, and others are fundamentally right about one thing: their concern about inner-city conditions. We must be concerned, as a society, not simply with protecting existing communities but with offering the hope of improvement for those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. One must concede that some individuals have benefited from participation in the existing Gatreaux program and that others would benefit should the program, or a similar one, be expanded. Participants have benefited from better physical quarters, a safer environment, and public goods (schools, most notably) superior to those provided in their old neighborhoods. One Gatreaux participant who moved with her toddler son to suburban Skokie told the *Chicago Tribune*, “I didn’t care if [the new neighborhood] was mixed. I wanted to be close to my job, to have a close place for my son to go to the playground, accessible to a sitter and close to a shopping center. The makeup of the community wasn’t a big concern.”

How should one interpret such a response? First, one quickly realizes that there are practical limits to the benefits of such programs. It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine dispersing the entire inner-city ghetto. Any such attempt would either spark increasingly widespread resistance or undermine the host community environment that was providing the safe playground and other amenities. What's more, though, there is a worrisome note sounded in the Skokie mother's comments. De-emphasizing the "make-up of the community" can be a polite way of saying that one feels out of place. The lack of comfort which Gans identifies in neighborhoods lacking socioeconomic unity is a two-way street. It's a source of concern to have lower-class newcomers in one's midst; it's also hard to be the newcomer.

On a visit to a Gatreaux-like program in Montgomery County, Maryland (the most affluent, white, suburban part of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area), I encountered such feelings firsthand. The Montgomery County program required developers of luxury homes to set aside space in their new developments for subsidized rental units. In one, I met a black mother and her teenage son who spoke of having few acquaintances in the development and of driving 20 miles each Sunday to attend church in the District. The mother made additional regular trips into the District to rehearse with a gospel music quartet with which she sang. Apart from such sacrifice there is also, to be sure, the gauntlet of harassment that Gatreaux-type families may have to endure—a prospect of which they are not unaware. It is notable that some residents of even the most infamous housing projects have expressed misgivings about Gatreaux-style relocation. The Secretary of the Cabrini-Green Local Advisory Council, a tenant group in the housing project known as one of Chicago's worst, has said, "Why would people want to move out where people don't want them? People don't want crosses burned on their lawns."

THE ECONOMICS OF COMMUNITY HOUSING

Although much has been made of the racial and social isolation public housing has engendered, one cannot overlook the possibility that there may be other causes of public housing's problems. Consider the dynamics of public housing—specifically its *publicness*. In contrast to traditional, privately built and owned poor neighbor-

hoods, housing projects must be maintained by public employees who, inevitably, will lack the commitment of a private owner. Poor neighborhoods from the pre-public housing era have been caricatured as the province of large, insensitive slumlords. Public data from Department of Labor Statistics (1894) and the U.S. Immigration Commission (1907), however, indicates that ownership was decentralized. In many cities a large percentage of the population in very poor neighborhoods lived in a building of fewer than eight units in which there was a resident owner.

Owner presence matters because it links poor neighborhoods to what can be called the housing ladder of opportunity: A well-maintained building can be sold by an owner looking to climb the housing ladder. A tenant or neighbor is a potential buyer. This infrastructure of ownership, it stands to reason, helped maintain the social fabric in poor neighborhoods. Public housing, while perhaps providing superior physical accommodations when new, provides none of this community infrastructure. Thus while public housing replaced poor communities, it could not substitute for them. That African-Americans arrived in large numbers in cities like Chicago at a time when public housing was ascendant has proved to be a terrible handicap. By being steered into public housing as an ostensibly attractive alternative to private “slums,” they were unintentionally denied the opportunity to begin the same kind of climb as other immigrant groups.

The inability to buy one’s own modest home to begin the climb up the housing ladder has also made it more difficult for responsible African-American citizens to separate themselves from underclass elements, a minority which dominates locales such as public housing. (By “underclass” I mean those who pursue illegal activities or prefer to depend on public assistance.) Ultimately one can argue that steering blacks into public housing inhibited, or at least delayed, formation of a black middle class—which, once established economically, would have more easily filtered into suburban areas, bringing nondivisive racial integration to latter-day Levittowns. Indeed, this is finally beginning to happen—although the history of concentrating blacks in subsidized housing may have slowed integration by making whites more wary of blacks than they would otherwise have been. (Thus one sees the emergence of predominantly black suburbs.)

NEW POOR COMMUNITIES

But if public housing is flawed, and voucher-based income-mixing efforts are flawed alternatives, what sort of policy might be pursued? The answer lies in public efforts to facilitate the creation of something wrongly believed to be a contradiction in terms: A neighborhood that is safe, secure, and pleasant, notwithstanding the fact that it is poor. The concept of poor neighborhoods that work sounds somehow radical. And yet there is tremendous nostalgia today for older immigrant neighborhoods which were exactly that. More important, there are efforts under way that seem to indicate that new, well-functioning, modest-income communities can be built.

Among the striking examples is one which has gone up in New York City, where Nehemiah Plan Homes, a nonprofit builder capitalized by a group of black churches, has erected some 2500 individually owned attached row houses in what had been some of the most desolate parts of Brooklyn and the South Bronx. Building economies and modest mortgage subsidies from the state of New York keep monthly payments low and sale prices at just \$56,000 per home. Most significantly, the majority of buyers earn \$20-\$35,000 a year and move to Nehemiah directly from public housing. Thus, buyers in Nehemiah are given the opportunity to separate themselves from underclass neighborhoods, to own a home, to take their place on the housing ladder, and to forge a functioning community. New York City police have, for instance, noted the low crime rate in Nehemiah neighborhoods. The public policy role here is noteworthy. New York City had to be willing to create fairly large, empty sites on which to build new homes by demolishing vacant, dilapidated structures. This will remind some of discredited urban renewal activities. Urban renewal, however, was far more prone to demolishing just the sort of well-functioning poor communities of which we are now in need and replacing them with conceptually flawed public housing.

There is a big difference between building new poor communities and using public funds to either restore old buildings or erect new housing projects of subsidized rental apartments. In the latter case, residents can qualify to move in simply by virtue of being poor. In contrast, new poor communities in which owner-occupancy is the norm call for more than need on the part of residents; moving in is an

achievement, made possible by striving and saving. Thus new communities can be formed in which the responsible are separated from the underclass. Is this a form of social Darwinism in which there will be a triage, with the most problematic portions of the poor being consigned to public housing? To be sure my strongest interest, like that of the Gatreaux program, lies in furthering the aspirations of responsible citizens and helping them form communities that will do so. But it is also my hope that the chance to own a home, or to live in a neighborhood in which ownership is the norm, will make the jump to the lower middle class seem achievable and more attractive for larger numbers of the poor and the underclass.

This is not to say that programs like Nehemiah will overnight be able to house everyone. But there is evidence that a significant group, even of public housing tenants, can afford to buy. The HUD survey of assisted renters shows that a consistent 15 percent of its subsidized population (whether in public housing or in units rented via a housing voucher) earns 150 percent or higher of the poverty level income. Even in public housing, 8 percent of households earn 200 percent or more of the poverty level. The point here is not simply to devise a new means of providing physical accommodations but, rather, to provide a way up for working families, a route which will serve as an example to others. Public housing units that are vacated would become available for poorer families. Thus, expanding the supply of owner-occupied, low-cost housing (as distinguished from low-income housing) will not make it any less urgent to find better ways to manage and maintain our existing public housing.

Simply building structures will not, moreover, create community. One must still consider how to provide good schools and other public services in poor neighborhoods. The problem of inequitable distribution of public goods has been a strong motivation for those who would seek to disperse the poor among the affluent. Providing good schools for poor children is an issue distinct from the housing issue and requires its own strategies. Lack of access to jobs on the part of the poor because of the limits of existing public transportation is, similarly, a distinct issue. It is neither pragmatic nor in keeping with American community mores to attempt to use housing subsidies to address these or other concerns. It may not sound idealistic to speak of building new poor neighborhoods. But it is a practical approach,

historically rooted, that offers a chance to minimize private resistance and the use of subsidy funds. Far better than expanding the Gatreux program is the possibility of encouraging the building of new neighborhoods, even if they are not rich. It is a skill we must rediscover.

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Community Considerations in Psychotherapy

WILLIAM DOHERTY

For many people, psychotherapy has replaced family as the only reliable haven in a heartless world. In fact, many people turn to psychotherapy to be healed from the hurts they believe their families have inflicted on them. Therapy is the ultimate private experience, occurring in small spaces bounded by thick walls of confidentiality. As ministers of this most intimate ritual, therapists generally keep the discourse personal, focusing on the client's feelings, thoughts, and close relationships. Talk about the outside world of community and its institutions distracts from the traditional goals of therapy unless such discussion can yield a greater understanding of individual or family dynamics.

There is something terribly constricting in this private hearth of psychotherapy. It is a world in which therapists tend to look at an individual's problems with a microscope. Unfortunately, as the following case demonstrates, sometimes a telescope might be more appropriate.

Anna and Don, both in their mid-30s, had a boy with cystic fibrosis and a girl with congenital neurological defects. Overwhelmed by years of caregiving for these children, Anna had sought out psychotherapy several times, with mixed results. She had a number of personal problems, including a familial tendency towards depression and low self-esteem, but her major complaints concerned her tortuous relationships with the myriad of physicians in her children's lives and her struggles to obtain medical and rehabilitative benefits from the health care system. She did not complain about the division of marital labor, which involved Don working very hard to maintain a job that had good medical benefits and Anna devoting her energies to the children and, increasingly, to giving talks for parents and health

professionals about caring for cystic fibrosis and childhood disabilities.

Two crucial aspects of this case—the impact of the health care system on Anna and her family, and Anna’s growing desire to change the system—were never part of her prior therapy except as venues for understanding her personal problems. Her struggles with the medical team were interpreted as reflecting her difficulty with interpersonal boundaries (partly true). Her busyness from giving talks and workshops was interpreted as her misplaced effort to heal herself (partly true, perhaps, but why dismiss her efforts?). Nowhere was the community dimension of the problem acknowledged, and nowhere were her efforts to change the community honored.

I might add that Anna had seen very good therapists who responded no differently than I have for most of my career. In fact, in all of the cases I discuss in this essay the therapist was a senior, well-regarded member of the clinical community. The issue is not competence but paradigm.

When I saw Anna and Don in therapy, I talked with them about their relationships with health professionals. I saw how the medical specialists were relying on Anna’s knowledge of the children’s medical conditions to encourage her to play the role of nurse practitioner instead of mother. But when she tried to initiate communication or express opinions in the manner of a nurse practitioner, the physicians saw her as over-involved and intrusive into their medical responsibility. She was left with too much responsibility for her children’s medical care, but punished when she exercised it. For me to have minimized the impact of these external factors on Anna and Don’s situation might have been in line with traditional psychotherapy, but hardly would have helped them work out their problems.

What had made this situation chronically dysfunctional was that the primary physician was not willing to either take on the greater responsibility of coordination or say “I can’t do it” and relinquish responsibility for the case. She hung on, blaming Anna for screw-ups. Finally, with my support, the family moved the children’s care to different providers who offered a more reasonable and fair division of responsibility between the medical team and the family. This step

of empowerment did more for Anna's emotional health than years of looking inward at herself, although that personal work may have prepared her for what she had to do.

PERSONAL OR SOCIETAL: USING THE APPROPRIATE LENS

A focus on community forces and institutions—racism, poverty, health care systems, schools, work settings, etc.—does not mean that therapists should ignore clients' personal and family issues. But it does mean that clients and their families need not always accept primary responsibility for problems that stem from forces in their environment. An African-American woman, for example, must likely cope with problems partly attributable to racism and sexism; helping her see her problems in a larger context can help her avoid paralyzing self-blame.

In a powerful article on middle-class African-American men in therapy, Anderson Franklin wrote about the pile up of social indignities many black men experience in their daily lives—cabs pass them by, restaurant checks are handed to their white colleagues, fellow passengers on elevators are made uncomfortable by their presence, and so on. In addition, there are the larger discriminations, such as restricted work assignments that carry less opportunity.

Franklin described how some therapists take the status quo as a given and focus on challenging the client to cope more constructively with it. In some circles this might be considered good reality-based therapy: You can't change cab drivers and waiters, so why get worked up over it? This sanitized therapeutic discourse, however, robs human experience of its moral turmoil and fervor. Outrage about injustice in society has an important place in psychotherapy (and an important role in stimulating social progress).

Attention to community forces is not new to social work or to sociology or to the pioneers in community mental health. But unfortunately it is new to mainstream psychotherapy, whose explanations for human problems have centered around individuals or, at most, families. In recent years, however, feminist therapists have led the way in showing how intertwined are the personal and the political in human life. These therapists have encouraged clients to take action to

change their families and the world around them, instead of only focusing on personal failures to cope with an unfair world.

I want again to make it clear that I am not proposing an either-or approach to therapy—i.e., either private issues or community issues. As Anderson Franklin has emphasized, it is important to help oppressed clients distinguish between the effects of oppression and their own contributions to their problems. A community-sensitive therapy carries the danger of treating clients like helpless victims of social forces beyond their influence or control, thereby robbing them of their own moral agency. The challenge is to embrace the private discourse of the psychological and interpersonal realm along with the public discourse of the social and political realm, without assigning secondary status to either and without editing out the moral domain. This is no small task for therapists in a mental health world increasingly oriented to narrow diagnoses and treatment plans.

GIVE COMMUNITY ACTIVISM ITS PROPER RESPECT

Most new writing on the social and political contexts of psychotherapy deals nearly exclusively with helping clients to make a life for themselves in the face of toxic community forces. Social activism, when it is discussed, takes the form of advocating for one's legitimate rights in the community. But what about people's responsibilities to promote the welfare of their communities, to make them safer, more humane, more beautiful, more just? On this issue of what Thomas Jefferson called "civic friendship," psychotherapy is just now beginning to break its silence. Mary Nicholas has recently emphasized the importance of altruism towards one's community, a quality she notes has often been pathologized in the past. And Andrew Samuels has sought to break down the boundaries between politics and psychology, calling for a "new psychological valuing of the potential of political engagement itself." Unfortunately the diffusion of these ideas from theory into therapy is very slow.

Although therapists rarely tell clients to be politically passive, I see many therapists negatively interpreting their clients' public service sensibilities and activities. A friend told me of a meeting with a therapist just before departing for Northern Ireland to work with war-oppressed children in the early 1970s. The therapist suggested

that my friend was doing this in order to deal with the internal war of his childhood. In another case, a colleague curtailed her social activism after her therapist reframed it as a misguided effort to fill up a hole inside herself by trying to save the world.

These socially committed individuals understood that there were personal issues involved in their choice of work—something that is true for all of us, including therapists. But they understandably resented being patronized and pathologized for their choice to make a difference. When a client tells a therapist he or she wants to change the world, there is something wrong when all the therapist sees is a patient suffering from cosmic co-dependency.

What about those who are heroically committed to community service? They tend not to be in therapy. A book by the developmental psychologists Anne Colby and William Damon gives a fascinating recounting of the lives of five moral exemplars in the United States, persons nominated by a wide range of acquaintances as having vast vision and personal dedication to serving disenfranchised people. Although not without the ability to introspect, these individuals were busy activists and not especially focused on their own needs and psychological conflicts. Each was making an important difference in a local community. As I finished the book, I felt a wave of relief that these servants of humanity had not fallen into the clutches of psychotherapists, including me not so many years ago.

THE COMMUNITY CONTEXT OF PERSONAL MEANING

So would the world be better off without psychotherapy? Actually, psychotherapy is just one social institution caught up in a “habit of the heart” in contemporary America that focuses on private gain over public good. If we did not have psychotherapy, more people would play casinos or broker junk bonds. The problem is that psychotherapists, who tend to view themselves as countercultural in promoting humanistic values, are actually as mainstream as the Chamber of Commerce in promoting a private/public split.

The tough issue is how to translate into sensitive clinical practice the idea of clients having responsibilities to their communities. People come to us because they are in pain and want personal help for

themselves and their families, not because they are looking for a new social cause. Sometimes clients are so immobilized that all they can do is take care of their immediate crisis. The last thing they need is a lecture on social responsibility or a list of volunteer community service projects from which to choose before the next session. As in all things clinical, timing is critical and the needs of our clients cannot be sacrificed to our own agendas for social change.

The problem with this traditional way of prioritizing private pain over public involvement, however, is that its vision is too narrow. There is no fundamental contradiction between pursuing personal needs and promoting the welfare of the community. When we promote clients' positive involvement in the community, we promote their own well-being as well.

I am not proposing a new prescription for social activism, but a new description of the web that connects private and public good. We are like fish in the ocean: Our personal well-being is tied inexorably to our social environment. Responsible participation in activities to preserve and promote that environment is both generous and self-serving—just as responsible parenting is. This does not mean that all community service can be reduced to the motive of self-interest, but rather that self-interest can be embraced and transcended in an ethic of the common good.

Responsible involvement with the larger world is necessary for what Charles Taylor calls the “horizon of significance” that gives meaning to human actions and life. Turning inward to a private cocoon of self and close relationships is ultimately self-defeating because it robs life of larger meaning. (In addition, as Alexis de Tocqueville warned over 150 years ago, a society in which individuals are “enclosed in their own hearts” is one in which government, fueled by citizens' lack of interest, will become increasingly powerful.)

Taylor summarizes the connection between personal meaning and humanity's larger concerns as follows:

The agent seeking significance in life, trying to define him-or-herself meaningfully, has to exist in a horizon of important questions. This is what is self-defeating in modes of contemporary culture that concentrate on self-fulfillment in *opposi-*

tion to the demands of society, or nature, which *shut out* history and the bonds of solidarity....Otherwise put, I can define my identity only against the background of things that matter. But to bracket out history, nature, society, the demands of solidarity, would be to eliminate all candidates for what matters. Only if I exist in a world in which history, or the demands of nature, or the needs of my fellow human beings, or the duties of citizenship, or the call of God, or something else of this order *matters* crucially, can I define an identity for myself that is not trivial. Authenticity is not the enemy of demands that emanate from beyond the self; it supposes such demands.

If there is a fundamental human need to grant significance to our lives, then for the therapist to ignore the importance of the larger world for his or her patient is therapeutic folly.

HOW TO ACTIVELY PROMOTE COMMUNITY

Sometimes clients directly bring up their community-serving activities, such as running a religious education program, serving on boards, working at a food bank, or being involved in global environmental issues. When clients bring up these involvements, therapists tend to respond in terms of how the activity serves the needs and goals of the client. If the therapist thinks the involvement is “healthy” for the client, then the therapist may inquire about the psychological benefits it offers the client. There is nothing wrong about this kind of discussion; the best sustained commitments are those that benefit the giver and the receiver. But therapists also need to highlight the client’s contributions to the welfare of others in the community. Helping children learn, providing leadership for community boards, feeding the homeless—these are morally praiseworthy activities. They serve those in need. They help sustain civil society. They are forms of civic friendship. Such activities ultimately help nurture both healthy communities and healthy individuals.

When clients do not bring up their community concerns, therapists must consider the more delicate issue of initiating conversation about community service. It is one thing to ask people about whether they feel safe in their neighborhood or whether they are being treated fairly by the welfare system. But it is harder to see how to proactively address the flip-side: the clients’ potential contributions to the com-

munity. Therapists become tongue-tied by the language of individual self-interest and our mandate to promote that self-interest. We don't want to impose our expectations on clients for how they should be living their social or political lives. Over generations, we have shaped what people expect to tell us and hear from us. And most clients come to therapy with expectations for private, personal discussions, not discussions of broader social issues.

To change this situation, therapists themselves must first understand the intimate bond between self and community. Feminists have pointed out how healing it can be for victimized women to become involved in public service and activism to help women facing similar traumas. Such obvious situations allow therapists to broach the idea of community service activities to the client, when the time is right clinically. From the moral perspective, the therapist must frame this recommendation or inquiry carefully: If it is put only in terms of self-interest ("I think this would be good for you") and not also in terms of the client acting on an internal moral standard of service to others, then the therapist loses an opportunity to promote moral growth as well as psychological healing. And the involvement with the community may last only as long as there are immediate benefits to the client.

Ideally the therapist and the client can create a discourse that does justice to the healing power of moral commitments. Many people who have suffered a great loss, or who are recovering from a problem such as alcoholism, articulate a sense of obligation or calling to help others who are facing the same challenges. (In Alcoholics Anonymous, they call it the "twelfth step.") These people know that their helping others also helps themselves, but they do not see self-improvement as their primary motivation. There is a moral quality to their thinking. They have a sense of obligation that they embrace but have not created on their own. Therapists can affirm these moral commitments as the essence of both personal healing and social responsibility.

Not all clients have experienced a loss or trauma that elicits the desire to help others similarly afflicted. With these people therapists can be proactive in a different way. For starters, therapists can ask during the first session, or even on intake forms, about the client's involvement in groups and activities in the community. What a

therapist asks about signals to a client what the therapist considers important. Early in therapy we can acquire important information about the client's level of community involvement and attitudes towards the community, information that can be woven into later therapy discussions.

In the first session of a marital therapy case of mine, Norma said that she had never worked outside the home, that she was "just a housewife." When I inquired about her other activities, she told me of her extensive leadership roles in the volunteer sector of her community. Later when she began to denigrate her community role in the face of a troubled marriage, I was able to reaffirm the inherent value of what she had done for others outside the family, while agreeing with her that she and her husband had some important internal work to do right now. She was then able to curtail her community leadership activities to work on her marriage for the time being, without rejecting the altruistic side of herself. In the seasons of a person's life, there are times to focus more on community and times to focus more on one's family and oneself. I am confident that Norma's community service in the future will be even better now that she has salvaged a failing marriage that had been a drag on her emotional energies for years.

We spend our lives in communities that form us and are, in turn, shaped by us. But we have inherited a tradition of psychotherapeutic discourse that makes this dimension of life nearly invisible and conversation about it nearly inaudible. Over the past 15 years, therapists have begun a conversation about how the community affects people who come to therapy. More recently therapists have been more tentatively considering how people who come to therapy affect their community. If we can learn to integrate a vision of community into our therapy, we may be able to reverse psychotherapy's contribution to the growing self-oriented privacy of contemporary life. We alone will not be able to check the larger forces breaking down community; psychotherapy is not powerful enough for that. But we can stop contributing to the problem and join with other groups promoting the reintegration of individuals and families in communities of justice and concern.

TO END GROUP IDENTITY?

The following article opens a dialogue on our pages on one of the most challenging issues of our time: should Americans see themselves and view one another merely as individuals or also as members of particularistic groups? And if the answer is the latter, what ought to be the rights and responsibilities of such groups? We are looking forward to publishing other viewpoints on this subject as well as brief commentaries.

The editors

Fulfilling the Promise of Equal Opportunity

CLINT BOLICK

The new Congress should enact a Civil Rights Act of 1995, one that honors, at long last, a fundamental principle upon which our nation was founded: that all people are entitled to equal treatment under the law.

After 30 years of constantly proliferating race-based remedies, Americans remain racially polarized. Policies that divide Americans along race and gender lines fuel resentment yet do little to open opportunities for the truly disadvantaged. For these reasons, we must critically reexamine race-based policies and pass a new civil rights law denying government the power to discriminate among Americans on the basis of race or gender.

Four decades ago it appeared America was on the verge of making good on the promise of equality under the law. As Thurgood Marshall argued to the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*:

The importance to our American democracy of the substantive question can hardly be overstated. The question is

whether a nation founded on the proposition that “all men are created equal” is honoring its commitments...when it...confers or denies benefits on the basis of color or race.

To this question, Marshall’s answer was unequivocal: “That the Constitution is color-blind is our dedicated belief.”

Ten years later, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, or religion in employment, education, public accommodations, and other areas of public life. As Senator Hubert Humphrey described the goal of the Civil Rights Act,

[O]ur standard of judgment in the last analysis is not some group’s power...but an *equal* opportunity for *persons*....Do you want a society that is nothing but an endless power struggle among organized groups? Do you want a society in which there is no place for the independent individual? I don’t.

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson invoked his executive powers to require government contractors to engage in “affirmative action” to eradicate discrimination. Though well-meaning in intention, affirmative action quickly deteriorated into numerical “goals and timetables,” designed not to ensure equal opportunity but numerical group parity. The resulting race-based quotas, set-asides, and other forms of discrimination were justified as temporary remedies for past discrimination. Justice Harry Blackmun’s opinion in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* reflected the underlying rationale: “In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race....And in order to treat some persons equally, we must first treat them differently.”

Three decades after the start of “affirmative action,” these supposedly “benign” and temporary preferences based on color, ethnicity, and gender in education, employment, and other opportunities proliferate at every level of government. A recent Congressional Research Service report documents some 160 race and gender preferences in federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders. This is so despite the fact that the majority of Americans living today were not even born during the era of state-sanctioned discrimination. And it is so despite repeated court decisions limiting such remedies to

instances where they are necessary and carefully tailored to remedying specific past discrimination.

These policies divide Americans on the basis of race, and reduce civil rights from those fundamental rights we share equally as Americans into a struggle over race-based entitlements. Yet these preferences do not tangibly expand opportunities for the truly disadvantaged because the benefits are concentrated on the most-advantaged members of the designated groups. Affirmative action in this form is trickle-down civil rights: opportunities bestowed upon the relatively advantaged in the name of the disadvantaged, who somehow never reap the promised benefits.

Does this mean that we should end all forms of affirmative action? No. To the contrary, efforts targeted to individuals on the basis of demonstrable merit or disadvantage (e.g., expanded recruitment, training programs, need-based scholarships, assistance for low-income students, aid for fledgling businesses, etc.) are much more precisely tailored to those who need them, yet they are not divisive. Conversely, those who oppose shifting the basis of affirmative action from race and gender to disadvantage are placed in the position of defending benefits to groups or individuals who, by definition, are not disadvantaged.

America needs to put these divisive issues behind it once and for all. Public opinion polls consistently show strong support among Americans of all colors for ending preference policies. Only when we finally curb the power of government to discriminate on the basis of race and gender can we turn our full attention to ensuring equal opportunity for all Americans.

EIGHT GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A CIVIL RIGHTS BILL

1. A new Civil Rights Act should embrace a simple principle: government may not, under any circumstances, confer opportunities on the basis of race, color, national origin, or gender. This is the essential prerequisite for a civil rights bill. Anything less than an absolute, comprehensive ban will provide government officials latitude to discriminate.
2. By embracing the nondiscrimination principle, the Act would help fulfill the purposes of the Constitution and the civil rights

laws. The goal of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as Senator Gordon Allot, one of its sponsors, observed, was a society in which “the color of a man’s skin...[is] totally extraneous.”

3. The Act need not amend any existing civil rights laws. None of the civil rights laws requires race or gender preferences. To the contrary, as Senator Harrison Williams, another of the sponsors of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, declared, “How can the language of equality favor one race...over another?...Those who say that equality means favoritism do violence to common sense.” Of course, the continued vigorous enforcement of our nation’s antidiscrimination laws is essential.
4. As the Congressional Research Service report demonstrates, most federal race and gender preferences are the product not of federal statutes, but of executive orders, agency regulations, other government policies, and court decrees. Hence a single comprehensive civil rights law would curtail most such policies.
5. To achieve comprehensive impact, the Act should deprive the federal government of the power to discriminate in employment, contracts, or policies; or to force others to discriminate through implementation of federal programs, regulations, or statutes.
6. The Act should not forbid truly voluntary actions taken by private entities that are otherwise consistent with federal civil rights laws. But it would remove pressure on private entities to engage in counting by race or gender.
7. The Act should leave intact existing court decrees.
8. The Act should preserve and redefine the concept of “affirmative action,” ensuring that its benefits are targeted to those who demonstrably need or deserve special assistance, and not on the basis of race or gender. We must recognize that many Americans do not have access to basic opportunities. Whereas affirmative action based on race and gender is divisive and rarely productive in providing opportunities to the truly disadvantaged, affirmative action policies based on disadvantage will target benefits to people who need assistance and thus provoke less societal division than race- and gender-based programs.

Though a Civil Rights Act of 1995 is necessary to heal racial division in our society, it is only a first step. We must turn our attention to eradicating barriers to opportunity in our society that prevent individuals from controlling their destinies.

Speaking from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., eloquently described the promise on which our nation's moral claim is staked:

When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

With enactment of a Civil Rights Act of 1995, our nation will have moved immeasurably closer to making that promise a reality.

Clean Water: One Rural Community vs. Washington

Daniel Zwerdling (Host): Republicans in Congress are also moving fast to change the way the government regulates pollution. They want to roll back regulations that they say are too expensive to enforce. Environmentalists and some public health officials say the proposals will roll back some of the most important gains of the last 20 years. But the Republican strategy comes as welcome news to many small rural communities such as Lancaster, New Hampshire. NPR's Anthony Brooks visited the area about 80 miles south of the Canadian border and has this report.

Anthony Brooks (Reporter): Lancaster is a small town of about 3,500 people. There is a white-steepled church on Main Street and on the edge of town are the snow-glazed ridges of the White Mountains. These days, if you talk with people in Lancaster about the burden of federal regulations, they'll complain about the Safe Drinking Water Act and then bring you here, to the edge of town, up a snow-covered track, into a pine forest, to the rushing head waters of Garland Brook.

So, how clean is this water?

Peter Golbaki (Town Engineer): If I had a cup, I'd drink it right now. It's actually-

Brooks: That's Peter Golbaki, the town engineer, who says Garland Brook has provided Lancaster's drinking water for the past century and over the decades not much has changed here.

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Golbaki: Times may be changing, but this watershed hasn't changed. It's actually getting better in the last several years. There used to be a lot of logging up here where they had trains hauling in and out of here. There was a lot more camps. There's very few things above here. It's national forest. We don't have a lot of problems with water quality, we've never had any waterborne disease outbreaks. The only thing living out there is probably deer and moose.

Brooks: Behind the rough log dam, there are a couple of metal screens to filter out twigs and leaves. Downstream a little, chlorine is added, and that's it. The problem is this does not comply with federal drinking water standards. Not because the water is not pure but because it's not being adequately filtered. So, the town has had to borrow money to build a modern filtration system up here in the woods and upgrade its distribution network. The price is \$3 million. According to Peter Golbaki, that's twice the town's annual budget to fix something he says isn't broken.

Golbaki: It's understandable to say you got to fix a problem, but to say there's no problem there, let's fix it, the feeling is not that regulations are bad, but that they may be a little bit more than we need considering the circumstances and where we are.

John Harrigan (Editor, *The Coos Co. Democrat*): There is a tremendous gut feeling that nobody really understands rural America when they make policy and regulations. It's just a given.

Brooks: That's John Harrigan, editor and publisher of *The Coos County Democrat* in Lancaster. He says household water bills have doubled to about \$300 a year which is a lot for many families here who survive on annual incomes of \$13,000 or \$14,000. Harrigan says the problem is federal regulations are applied to small towns the same way they're applied to large cities.

Harrigan: The Clean Water Act is one of those federal initiatives that is based on the presumption that the whole country is urban or suburban and polluted. It is a clear example of designs that are fabricated or thought up in Washington and then applied willy-nilly to every part of the country no matter about culture, no matter about history, no matter about beauty and geography and topography, and that's what I think is fueling this whole fire.

Brooks: Harrigan's concern is one that many people at this meeting share. These are small town administrators from across New England who have gathered for a conference in White River Junction, Vermont. Some here are also struggling with safe drinking water regulations. Others are hard-pressed to meet waste water rules or toxic clean-up standards. New England administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency, John DeWillers, convened this meeting and says he knows why towns like Lancaster are angry.

John DeWillers (EPA): I understand that sentiment and that frustration, but the bottom line is there are people in other parts of the world who die every day, thousands of people are dying because they don't have healthy drinking water even in our own country. Major cities, Washington, D.C., last summer, are having to stop their residents from drinking the water at various times because they don't meet public health standards. We want to avoid that in Lancaster, New Hampshire.

Brooks: DeWillers says the EPA is aggressively enforcing the Safe Drinking Water Act to protect urban and rural communities from waterborne viruses and bacteria. While these may not be present in the water today, in the absence of adequate filtration, they could be tomorrow. In the case of Lancaster, DeWillers points out that of the \$3 million bill for the filtration system, \$1 million is paid for by state and federal grants. The rest is financed by a low-interest federal loan which cuts the burden of the mandate to about \$60 per household. DeWillers says the EPA is willing to help small communities find ways to finance environmental protection but it's not willing to roll back regulations that safeguard the nation's health.

DeWillers: There's a mood in Washington that seems to be saying, we don't care about safe drinking water. We're not going to require it and we're not going to pay for it. That's a very unhealthy trend for this country, both figuratively and literally.

Brooks: But to people in Lancaster what's unhealthy is the conceit that they can't take care of themselves. Pam Andre is Lancaster's town manager.

Pam Andre (Town Manager): I know there's a lot of concern out there that if we don't have these regulations the towns are going to just go

helter skelter and not do anything. Well, I don't agree with that. The town of Lancaster has for many years been under the demands of its own residents and we have people concerned about water quality and air quality and they're not going to let us destroy their environment and we respond to our taxpayers. The reason we respond is we're right there, they're in our face. We can't hide behind going down to Washington.

Brooks: The bills to restrict unfunded mandates passed by Congress might offer some relief to towns like Lancaster in the future, though they wouldn't affect existing rules. Pam Andre believes the legislation is a step in the right direction—a view with broad support in Washington these days. Recently, House Speaker Newt Gingrich suggested the assault on federal regulations is under way, saying unfunded mandates are just the beginning.

This is Anthony Brooks reporting.

Parenting Alone

Shoshana Alexander, *In Praise of Single Parents: Mothers and Fathers Embracing the Challenge*

New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1994, 404 pp.

Reviewed by Judith Stacey

Here is a book to give responsive readers of this journal pause. Its title alone flaunts a stance heretical to prevailing communitarian family values. Communitarian voices—from Communitarian Network founder-director Amitai Etzioni, to President Clinton's chief domestic policy adviser, William Galston, to David Blankenhorn and Barbara Defoe Whitehead of the Institute for American Values, and on down the list—currently dominate the mournful Greek chorus ringing opprobrium, rather than praise, on the heads of single parents. Those who parent alone (their chastising chords intone), be it by design or default, head families that are incomplete, inferior, and injurious to the commonweal.

The most vocal communitarians regard single-parent families as a primary symptom and source of nihilistic individualism, a social blight they hope to eradicate with a campaign for family values advocating a two-parent family as “every child's birthright.” If the more compassionate voices among them venture notes of sympathy for those driven to this unfortunate plight by feckless fate, none risk the hubris of murmuring praise.

How, then, will communitarians respond to Shoshana Alexander's earnest hymn to her heroic kindred? Committed to the same kind of responsible, loving, stable, child-centered, and communal family values communitarians profess, she places the needs of her young son, Elias, well before her own career or personal pleasures. Alexander prizes human relationships over material rewards, and collective

over individual welfare. She even grew up dreaming of the picture-perfect, two-parent family communitarians celebrate.

Nonetheless, Alexander is a single mother by choice—well, sort of. A real-life Murphy Brown, her lover abandoned her when she became pregnant, and she discovered within herself a desire to parent far more potent than her wish to do so in the prescribed, up-to-code family structure. This personal crisis led Alexander to reexamine her priorities, and she transformed her work and social life, preparing to nurture the child growing within. Coping with the financial, emotional, and social burdens her unanticipated “choice” produced, she conceived this book as well.

Alexander writes in prose geared to instruct, reassure, challenge, and yes, praise single parents—current, would-be, or could-be single parents, which is to say nearly all of us. Drawing upon impressive reflexivity about her personal experience, extensive interviews with other single parents, and library research, Alexander addresses her beleaguered peers in a popular but not pollyannish manner. Her book encourages single parents to resist moralistic bashing from family-values chauvinists, and to value their own different, but not inherently deficient, families instead.

One-fourth of the nation’s children live with single parents, and the number of children who live with a single parent at some time before they complete their high school years is as great as the number who are reared in “intact” two-parent homes. “This is what is going on now,” the author sensibly reminds her readers. “This is what our families are like now.” Refusing to condescend to single parents by simply praising them, Alexander pays them the compliment of taking their family form seriously on its own terms. Her compassionate book honors the unique strengths that successful single-parent families exhibit, but it gives more than equal attention to the challenges and limitations they confront as well.

Venturing into the polarized debate over whether family structure or the character of family relationships more greatly affects child development, *In Praise of Single Parents* rings in decidedly on the latter side without dismissing the relevance of family structure. While asserting that economic differences between single- and dual-parent families produce the most dramatic contrasts, Alexander also be-

believes that the number and gender of children's parents can generate significant differences in children's emotional development. For example, not only do single parents confront more extreme family and work conflicts than coupled parents, but because their children know they are their parent's primary attachment, parenting alone makes it more difficult to establish emotional boundaries and limits.

Not all of the structural advantages, however, fall in the "two-parent" column. The double burdens of being a single, or as Alexander aptly suggests, a "double" parent, can also foster emotional strengths. Because "no one can be a single parent," as one of the book's best-named chapters puts it, solo parents have stronger incentives than couples do to build extended kin and communal ties. Thus, they are much more likely to grasp the fundamentally social character of effective parenting. "Our children need 'significant others,'" Alexander states. "Families need communities."

Personal and accessible, *In Praise of Single Parents* presents itself primarily as a self-help resource and advice manual, replete with an appendix listing support networks, organizations, and literature to assist single parents navigating challenges—from dealing with the "other" parent in the flesh or as phantasm, to dating, child care, housing, and even sleeping arrangements. If, at moments, Alexander's sensibility veers a bit too much in a New Age, holistic direction for communitarian tastes, at other times the book is too close to communitarian sentiment for my personal comfort.

From its subtitle to its closing line, "Love is the most magical of all," the book is resolutely humanist. Despite the racial and gender demographics and material conditions of single parenthood, Alexander employs deceptively inclusive terms. She ecumenically praises single parents, race unspecified, rather than the single mothers, who comprise more than 90 percent of their ranks, and among whom African-American and Latina women are disproportionately represented. Alexander is well aware of the discrimination and disrespect single mothers and their children endure, but she refuses anger, self-pity, or indignation. While eager to promote the kinds of employment, social service, and cultural conditions in which her own child-centered, family values could flourish, she often understates the power stakes involved, at times waxing, too wistfully, hopeful

about the possibility of family-friendly, corporate, workplace reforms.

Precisely because this book arrives devoid of political or ideological pretensions, it just might attain social significance far beyond its natural constituency, particularly among communitarians. Nearly all contemporary parents confront such dilemmas as balancing family and work commitments, negotiating emotional conflict, setting limits, arranging successful child care, and the many other topics Alexander discusses with honesty and intelligence. More pertinent, however, *In Praise of Single Parents* might nudge communitarians to confront an unacknowledged contradiction in the contemporary rhetoric of family values. A genuine commitment to communitarian responsibility for the welfare of children and adults collides with the campaign's exaggerated emphasis on favoring the private, and too often privatistic, two-parent family structure. Not only do too many two-parent families contain de facto single parents, but too many two-parent families and their countryfolk in the United States believe that their children's welfare is their responsibility alone.

Communitarians above all should recognize that just as no one can be a single parent, neither can two parents rear responsible members of our communities by themselves. Parents need numerous "comadres" and "copadres," and children need numerous social grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins to support and supplement whatever family fate has thrown their way. What is more, far too many child-free adults in our society are instead childless. Nonparents and communities alike could benefit from participating actively in nurturing the next generation. Those who truly wish to counter the destructive, individualizing effects of a materialist, market society should be promoting more opportunities for collective responsibility for children rather than fortifying the private, two-parent family.

Alexander's poignant discussion of the humiliating and antisocial effects of punitive, antiwelfare "reforms" alone should be required reading for communitarians and for residents of Capitol Hill. Indeed, her book could well be renamed, "In Praise of Single-Parent Family Values." These turn out to be a lot more compatible with communitarian principles than are those represented in the two-

parent kind that President Clinton and Newt Gingrich currently compete to praise. “Like any family,” Alexander reminds us, “one headed by a single parent works best when it is held in the hands of a supportive community.”

Harriet Nelson of *Ozzie and Harriet* died this fall. The time has come, as Alexander urges, “to acknowledge the changes in family structure and to consider how to make the families we do have work.” We might begin by offering all those parents struggling to do so the kind of compassion, support, and praise this book hopes to inspire.

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ESPECIALLY NOTED

DANA MITRA

Steven Waldman, *The Bill* (New York: Viking, Penguin Books, 1995). 288 pp.

In a snappy, journalistic fashion, Waldman provides a behind-the-scenes look at the paths the national service bill and the education loan reform bill took as they gained passage during 1993. Through dialogue between the cast of characters (listed at the front of the book if anyone gets lost) and keen analysis, Waldman provides an intimate look at legislation that typified the clash between an attempt to “do good” and the personal agendas of all of the movers and shakers of Washington, right up to the President himself.

Jamin B. Raskin and John Bonifaz, *The Wealth Primary: Campaign Fundraising and the Constitution* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Responsive Politics, 1994). 70 pp.

Ever notice that the person who collects the most money almost always wins the election? Transferring to popular language an argument originally prepared for a law review article, Raskin and Bonifaz challenge the claim that freedom of speech and freedom to spend are synonymous. They argue that the current use of money in political campaigns undermines democracy and the voting rights of Americans.

Dale T. Miller and Deborah A. Prentice, “The Self and the Collective,” *Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, 20, 5, October 1994, pp. 451-53.

In a brief essay, Miller and Prentice outline the interdependence between self and community, or as they call it, the “collective.” While it is common to think of groups as comprised of individuals, this essay describes how one’s self-concept in part develops from identifying with social groups.

Don E. Eberly, editor, *Building a Community of Citizens: Civil Society in the 21st Century* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994). 376 pp.

This collection of essays leaves behind partisan politics and talks about the need for all Americans to address the content of our nation's character, including issues such as the decline of the family and the tension between diversity and common culture. Of particular interest is an essay by Harry C. Boyte that emphasizes the importance of thinking of community as a populist form of citizenship.

Matteo Gianni, *Les liens entre citoyenneté et démocratie sur la base du débat "Libéraux-Communautariens,"* Etudes Et Recherches, No. 26, 1994, Université de Genève, Département de Science Politique. 120 pp.

Communitarian theory has taken hold in Europe. This French essay compares the connections between citizenship and democracy in communitarian and liberal frameworks.

Tony Wagner, *How Schools Change: Lessons from Three Communities* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994). 279 pp.

Wagner inserts himself into the heart of three very different schools attempting wholesale reform, and comes out with lifelike vignettes of students talking about taking responsibility for their education, faculties attempting to collaborate, and administrators trying to maintain a vision for the community. Through a description of these communities, Wagner outlines the essential aspects of effective school reform: clear goals, core values, and collaboration.

Civicus, *Citizens: Strengthening Global Civil Society* (Washington, D.C.: Civicus: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, 1994). 385 pp.

Civicus has published this collection of essays in an attempt to analyze worldwide trends in the Third (or nonprofit) Sector, detailing activity in places such as Latin America, Africa, and North America. Yet the purpose of the book is not solely to inform, but to advocate a global alliance in the Third Sector that will strengthen citizen participation and action. *Citizens* is a call to action for planetary citizenship.

Buddy Squires, director, *The Moral Life of Children* (South Carolina Educational Television Network, in cooperation with the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University).

Robert Coles's famous journey into the character development of children has come to life in a documentary. Planned for broadcast nationally on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) later this year, the film follows the lives of six American families as their children struggle with moral dilemmas that are a part of growing up in the United States. Coles hopes that the film will be a part of the ongoing conversation in the United States about moral questions and family life.

AN R.C. DOCUMENT

Following are three excerpts from President Clinton's 1995 State of the Union Address:

“All Americans have not just a right but a solemn responsibility to rise as far as their God-given talents and determination can take them, and to give something back to their communities and their country in return. Opportunity and responsibility, they go hand in hand; we can't have one without the other, and our national community can't hold together without both.”

...

“If you go back to the beginning of this country, the great strength, as Alexis de Tocqueville pointed out when he came here a long time ago, has always been our ability to associate with people who were different from ourselves, and to work together to find common ground. And in this day, everybody has a responsibility to do more of that. We simply cannot wait for a tornado, a fire, or a flood to behave like Americans ought to behave in dealing with one another.”

...

“Our fortunes and our posterity also depend upon our ability to answer some questions from within, from the values and voices that speak to our hearts as well as our heads, voices that tell us we have to do more to accept responsibility for ourselves and our families, for our communities, and, yes, for our fellow citizens. We see our families and our communities all over this country coming apart, and we feel the common ground shifting from under us—the PTA, the town hall meeting, the ball park—it's hard for a lot of overworked parents to find the time and space for those things that strengthen the bonds of trust and cooperation.”

LIBERTARIANS, AUTHORITARIANS, COMMUNITARIANS

DAVID E. CARNEY

From the Libertarian Side

THE RIGHT TO NOT SHOWER

As with the beginning of any academic year, there are always glitches to be worked out. In the Hollidaysburg Area School District, this year was no different, except that this year's glitch was the mandatory shower rule. After participating in physical education, all students were required to shower before going off to their next class.

Parents and students felt that such mandatory showering violated their sense of modesty and they took their concerns to the American Civil Liberties Union. Citing issues of privacy, the ACLU's Pittsburgh chapter threatened legal action against the school district. "[W]e don't believe the government can demonstrate a compelling interest to force you to take your clothes off," said Executive Director Vic Walczak.

The school district abandoned the policy, although all sides agreed that the impact of the abandonment would be minimal. As Walczak admitted, "[M]y guess is that peer pressure is going to result in most students taking showers."

Chicago Tribune, 21 November 1994

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 30 November 1994

OLLIE GET YOUR GUN

In a move to make it easier for Virginians to carry concealed weapons, the Virginia House Courts of Justice Committee voted 16-6 to approve a measure that eliminates old regulations. Previously,

people had to petition the courts for permits to carry concealed weapons. The court used criteria such as criminal record, good character, and demonstrable need. The new guidelines force judges to approve all petitions except those where the petitioner has a certain type of criminal conviction.

Proponents of the new policy had been reasonably satisfied with the old regulations, but were shocked and ultimately moved to action when they discovered that during all of last year only one concealed weapon permit was issued in all of Fairfax County. Additionally, proponents argue that the test of character allows judges to wield power arbitrarily.

Delegate Jerrauld Jones, an opponent of the measure, argues that, “We ought to be going in the other direction, rather than arming our citizens and playing into their fears.” State police worry that the new legislation will increase the number of concealed weapons from 6,000 to 12,000. And with increased numbers of concealed weapons, authorities fear increases in violent crime.

The Virginian-Pilot, 21 February 1995

From the Authoritarian Side

A *VEILED* THREAT?

By order of French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, scarves—“ostentatious signs”—worn by some Muslim women have been banned from schools. This curtailing of rights was justified by equating scarves with Islamic militancy and by claiming that they hinder the integration of Muslims into French society. The ban, effecting about 1,000 of the 200,000 Muslim students in French schools, carries the penalty of expulsion.

Supporters of the ban argue that there should be “no apparent differences among students.” They further contend that veils are a form of proselytizing, and therefore unwelcome in French schools. “The Muslims have to make a reinterpretation of their tradition and

separate politics and religion....[T]hey have to change to be really French citizens, and get equality between genders,” says Professor Dominique Schnapper, author of several books on immigration.

Opponents of the ban see no problems. Arguing that the ban is based on fear of Islam, they point to legal support for their position. Sonja Merazga, an 18-year-old girl awaiting expulsion from school for wearing her veil, declares, “According to the [U.N. Universal] Declaration on Human Rights, no person should have any fear of showing his religion. According to the French constitution, you have a right to wear a religious symbol.” Lastly, to show that the discrimination is actually based on religion, opponents point to other religious symbols—yarmulkes and crucifixes—that are not banned.

National Public Radio, *1 November 1994*

The Washington Post, *23 November 1994*

JIM CROW'S BLACKLIST

In Union Point, GA, business people, police officials, and the town government joined together in December 1994 to solve a shoplifting problem. Their solution: ban 21 *suspected* shoplifters, all African-Americans, from patronizing Union Point stores. The ban, which was given a constitutional thumbs-up by at least three local attorneys, threatens the 21 persons with charges of trespassing for the first violation of the ban, and disorderly conduct for subsequent violations.

According to business owner Donald Godbee, “We’re trying to stop shoplifting. I’m not against black people, but I can’t keep letting them steal from me.” Providing post hoc justification, Police Chief Richard Reese argues, “We haven’t had near as many calls at these businesses for rowdiness or shoplifting or things of that nature [since the ban was initiated].” Only African-Americans are on the list because, according to Police Chief Reese, there have not been any white shoplifters in Union Point.

Samuel Atkins, attorney for eight of the 21 African-Americans, has filed for an injunction and for compensatory and punitive damages from the mayor, the city, and the 16 businesses involved. “They’re branding all young black people as criminals in Union Point.

If they have done something wrong, bring charges.” In fact, many of the 21 have no criminal record or no criminal convictions relating to theft. As banned shopper Sherry King explains, “I’ve got a clean record, and I have been publicly humiliated.” Chiming in on the side of the banned are U.S. Representative Cynthia McKinney (D-GA) and County Sheriff Ricky Brown.

Soon the legality of the ban—and the subsequent trespassing charges leveled against three of the banned—will be before the court system. Only then will it be possible to heal what Sheriff Brown calls the “black eye on law enforcement.”

The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, 3,4 February 1995

From the Community At Large

CHILD CARE ALERT

In January 1995, researchers at four major universities released the results of their four-state *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers* study. Through an examination of 100 child care centers in each state, the researchers noted serious deficiencies in child care and made recommendations to remedy these deficiencies.

Quality care, defined as “that which is most likely to support children’s positive development,” exists at only one in seven child care centers. Almost an equal number, one in eight, were of a less than minimal quality—a figure that jumps to 40 percent when examining the quality of care for infants and toddlers. Quality of care is directly related to “staff-to-child ratios, staff education, and administrators’ prior experience.” Stringent licensing standards also promote quality care.

While no child care comes cheap, the difference in price between mediocre care and quality care is not substantial. Quality care costs about 10 percent more than mediocre care.

Although 90 percent of parents rate the care their children receive as quality, the data demonstrate that less than half of the centers in the study really provide quality care. The reason for such conflicting figures is an inadequate amount of consumer knowledge. The inability of parents to observe all facets of child care, the prioritization of certain aspects of care, and the lack of a comparison point frequently hinder parents' ability to make an accurate assessment of the level of care received by their children.

The researchers provided one broad recommendation. "The nation must commit to improving the quality of child care services and to ensuring that all children and their families have access to good programs. That is, GOOD-QUALITY child care must be a merit good in the United States." To achieve this goal the study recommended four steps: First, a consumer education campaign must be undertaken. Second, states must tighten licensing requirements. Third, increased investment in personnel is needed to create a skilled and stable child care workforce. Fourth, government, businesses, and philanthropic support must be tied to the standard of care, and also increased to ensure availability of care.

Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers, *January 1995*

NEW CONTRACEPTIVE

Teenagers may be bringing home a new doll. Baby Think It Over is a doll with a mind, a mouth, and a few other things the typical student-carried egg or bag of flour just doesn't have. Every few hours, 24 hours a day, a microprocessor in the doll triggers a recording of an actual baby crying. A key attached to a student's wrist must then be inserted in the back of the doll and held in place for 20 minutes or more. The crying will not stop until the doll has been properly "nursed." But the technological advances do not stop here.

The cycles between crying can be adjusted to create colicky or easy babies. And green, yellow, and red lights on the doll's back flash to indicate neglect and abuse. In addition, the dolls come in a variety of races and styles, including premie dolls that can be programmed to exhibit the effects of being exposed to drugs while in the womb.

Eighteen-year-old student Jennifer Graf, who used the baby as a homework assignment, said, "My boyfriend said that as long as we had that baby, we weren't going anywhere—and we didn't. It was a great motivation for waiting 7 to 10 years to have one of my own." Creator Richard Jurmain sees the sleeplessness caused by caring for the doll as one of the doll's greatest abilities. A lack of sleep "is a compelling rationale for not getting pregnant."

New York Times, 3 August 1994
Education Week, 16 November 1994

NEW USE FOR *TERRY* STOPS

Over the course of the last year, police departments in Indianapolis, Indiana and Kansas City, Missouri have engaged in a weapons seizure program designed by University of Maryland criminologist Lawrence W. Sherman. The program, aimed at getting guns off the streets and therefore reducing crime, teaches police officers how to use existing regulations to search cars and pedestrians for firearms.

In areas with high incidence of gun-related crimes, officers are taught to be on the lookout for infractions of automobile and pedestrian regulations. Such infractions give officers the authority to stop the offender. In many cases, the officers gain additional information that gives them the power to search the car or frisk the pedestrian.

The ability to search the car and frisk the pedestrian comes from the 1968 Supreme Court decision, *Terry v. Ohio*. In the case, the Court ruled that a police officer can frisk a pedestrian if the officer has a "reasonable belief" based on "specific and articulable facts" that a gun may endanger the officer. *Terry* has been expanded by the Supreme Court to include searches of automobiles.

The experimental program has been a success. In Kansas City, gun-related crimes decreased 50 percent in the test area, while the number of guns seized increased tenfold. These benefits were not achieved in the control areas or in other areas where there were stepped-up patrols but no *Terry* stops. Sherman also touts the program as a way to "bypass gun control gridlock."

The New York Times, 20 November 1994

COMMUNITY SERVICE SURVIVES

On January 19, 1995, U.S. District Judge Charles L. Brieant bolstered the status of community service requirements as part of high school curricula. The 40-hour community service requirement for graduation at the Rye Neck Schools was deemed constitutional, thwarting the challenge of Daniel Immediato who claimed that required community service equals slave labor.

Citing the “educational merits of school service programs,” the Court left curricular decisions in the hands of elected officials, not judges. The Court further explained that service promotes the mission of public schools.

This ruling solidifies the position of those schools that include community service among their graduation requirements. According to the Education Research Service, more than a quarter of all public school districts in the United States incorporate or will shortly incorporate service into their curricula.

PR Newswire, *20 January 1995*

THE WEAKENING FAMILY

Number, in millions, of Americans in 1970 who were divorced: 4.3

Number, in millions, of Americans in 1993 who were divorced: 16.7

Source: New York Times

THE COMMUNITY'S PULSE

INDIVIDUAL VS. COMMUNITY:

Regardless of how individuals feel about owning a gun, should our needs as a society overrule?
27% Yes
42% No

Should individuals have the right to own a gun regardless of society's concerns about violent crime today?
41% Yes
36% No

If any individual does unhealthy things—smoking/drinking—is it his own business?
43% Yes
24% No

Should everyone who gets government benefits have to give something back?
69% Yes
9% No

Do adults have the right to have as many children as they want even if they can't raise them without public assistance?¹
20% Yes
53% No

PUBLIC TRUST— TWO GENERATIONS:

Can government be trusted always or most of the time?²
76% Yes in 1964
19% Yes in 1994

FIRST AMENDMENT:

Do nude magazines and X-rated movies provide harmless entertainment for those who enjoy them?
44% Yes
54% No

Should books that contain dangerous ideas be banned from public school libraries?³
51% Yes
47% No

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION:

Should we make every possible effort to improve the position of blacks and other minorities in society, even if it means giving them preferential treatment?⁴
 Of whites:
25% Yes
73% No
 Of blacks:
62% Yes
36% No

SCHOOL PRAYER:

Should there be organized prayer in public schools?
64% Yes
29% No

Is organized prayer the kind of issue that you would like to change the Constitution for?⁵
29% Yes
59% No

GOP & ABORTION:

Should abortion be generally available to those who want it? Yes **40%** Of all adults
34% Of Republicans

Should it be available but under stricter limits than it is now? Yes **37%** All
37% GOP

Or should it be not permitted at all? Yes⁶ **21%** All
28% GOP

GENERATION GAP?

(Opinions by age group)

74% (18-30)
75% (31-48)

Is working hard the key to getting ahead? Yes **66%** (49-62)
78% (63 +)

Is unlimited opportunity more important than ensuring greater equality of income? Yes **72%** (18-30)
74% (31-48)
78% (49-62)
69% (63 +)

70% (18-30)

Does big government pose the greatest threat to America's future? Yes **70%** (31-48)
66% (49-62)
63% (63 +)

81% (18-30)
87% (31-48)

Are you generally satisfied in your personal life? Yes **85%** (49-62)
83% (63 +)

50% (18-30)
59% (31-48)

Have you done volunteer work to help others? Yes **54%** (49-62)
45% (63 +)

87% (18-30)
87% (31-48)

Have you always believed in God? Yes⁷ **88%** (49-62)
92% (63 +)

LAW AND ORDER:

Is the primary goal of prison to punish criminals? **15%** in 1971
 Yes **61%** in 1993

Is the primary goal of prison to rehabilitate criminals? Yes⁸ **76%** in 1971
25% in 1993

If someone sues you and you win the case, should he pay your legal costs? **85%** Yes

If you sue someone and lose the case, should you pay his legal costs?⁹ **44%** Yes

CIVIL RIGHTS:

Should school boards have the right to fire teachers who are known homosexuals? **38%** Yes
58% No

Is AIDS God's punishment for immoral behavior?¹⁰ **39%** Yes
57% No

1. "What Creates Health," DYG, Inc. for The Healthcare Forum, 1994
 2. *Time*, 9/26/94
 3. *The New Political Landscape*, Times Mirror, October, 1994
 4. *The New Political Landscape*, 10/94
 5. *The New York Times* and CBS News, 12/94
 6. *The New York Times* and CBS News, 7/94
 7. Everett C. Ladd, *Reader's Digest*, 1/95
 8. *The Public Perspective*, Sept./Oct., 1994
 9. *U.S. News & World Report*, 1/30/95
 10. *The New Political Landscape*, 10/94

Compiled by Alyssa Qualls

COMMUNITY NEWS

NEWS FROM THE THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY!

Girl Scouts are known for camping trips, green-and-brown uniforms and, of course, cookies. But if the activities of one Girl Scout council in Ohio attract attention, scouting may pick up a far racier reputation.

At the Great Rivers Girl Scout Council in Cincinnati, seventh- and eighth-grade girls can participate in a weekend sex-education course. But the “Sexuality and You” seminar is chock-full of goodies and games that might make Madonna blush.

In one game, each girl gets a card taped on her back with a word on it that she can't see, and the other girls have to help her guess what the word is by answering her questions. It sounds like the old get-acquainted party game in which people get tagged with the names of celebrities, but here's the twist: These girls wear labels like “gigolo,” “whore,” and “voyeur.”

Shocking? Not a bit, says the teaching manual designed to accompany the event. “There is a spectrum of sexual feeling and expression, and most people fall in the middle of a bell-shaped distribution of expression rather than at either extreme.”

Speaking of shapes, another exercise involves passing around a plastic replica of the male genitalia for a more-than-unusually-graphic touchy-feely session. According to the teaching manual,

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event leaders should “take the male model around to each girl. Help them to touch the penis, scrotum, and testicles. The model is life-like and helps to demystify what the male sex organs feel like.”

A spokeswoman says the Girl Scouts provide “no particular viewpoint” about sexuality and says the retreat helps boost girls’ self-esteem. At the end of the weekend exercise, family members are invited to see what their little girls learned. But the girls are cautioned not to leave any incriminating evidence around: “All materials which will not be used in the Summary Session should be put away before the arrival of guests,” advises the manual.

After all, parents could misunderstand: “Family members are obviously more likely to be supportive, patient, and interested. At the same time, they often represent 12-14 years of bias and conspiracy of silence about sexuality which requires courage to confront.”

Evan Gahr

TEENS JUDGING TEENS

When Michael Cabral, a 14-year-old from East Los Angeles, was caught stealing a car stereo, he, his parents, and his parole officer agreed to head for “teen court,” an alternative sentencing project in which juveniles charged with misdemeanors are judged by a jury of peers. Michael in particular embraced the idea; he admits he had expected to skate through the system. To his astonishment, his fellow teenagers on the jury gave him a tongue-lashing and sentenced him to 600 hours of community service. After six months of pulling weeds and mowing lawns at Abraham Lincoln High School, Michael says he is a changed man.

“I didn’t expect them to be so hard on me, but I deserved it,” said Michael, whose sentence was reduced to a more manageable but still daunting 200 hours by Judge Jamie Corral, the head of the program here. “When I walked in there, I didn’t care. I had a bad attitude and

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was talking back to them. They said, 'If you don't care, then we don't care, and we'll give you all this work to do.'

"Now I care."

Michael is not alone. Teen courts began in Odessa, Texas in 1983, and there are now more than 150 around the country. The 30 programs operating in Texas reported at their annual meeting last month that yearly recidivism rates were less than 5 percent, as against 30 percent to 50 percent in the state's juvenile courts.

In Los Angeles County, which opened its first teen court less than two years ago, only 3 percent of the juveniles who appeared before it have been arrested again, Judge Corral said. In the juvenile courts of the city of Los Angeles, recidivism ranges from 10 percent when community service is required to more than 30 percent when teenagers are simply put on probation.

"You have to sell Johnnie what Johnnie buys and see Johnnie through Johnnie's eyes," said Phillip J. Egans, a deputy probation officer here, explaining the success of peer jurisprudence. "That's what teen court does." And, administrators say, it does it inexpensively. Odessa's program, for example, costs only \$30,000 a year.

The typical teen court consists of an adult judge and a jury of 6 to 12 teenagers, usually students who have volunteered from local high schools as well as some defendants who have completed their probation. The courts meet once a week or every two weeks for several hours after school. In Los Angeles, six-member teenage juries deal with three or four cases at a session.

Defendants here are chosen by the city's probation department from a list of first-time, nonviolent offenders ages 14 to 18. The defendants present their own cases, while probation officers present the other side. Jurors do all the questioning. Defendants can plead not guilty or guilty, but must have agreed beforehand to abide by whatever sentence is prescribed by the jury and handed down by the judge. Punishment can include community service and essay assignments, and must be completed within a six-month probation. The charges are then removed from the defendant's record.

Jurors say that all participants learn from the experience. "I feel like when they see us up there, it makes them think about themselves

and what they really want as their future,” said Davina Aguilar, a 16-year-old junior at Woodrow Wilson High School near downtown Los Angeles, who has served as a juror six times. “It makes us all think, ‘Would I rather be a juror or a convict?’”

Critics of teen courts say the program deals only with lesser offenses committed by nonviolent offenders, many of whom would have been counseled and released by a regular court. “Many of these kids would probably not come back through the system anyway,” said Deputy District Attorney Tom Higgins, who heads the Juvenile Division of the Los Angeles District Attorney’s office. “So, in the grand scheme of things, teen court may not matter.”

Supporters of the program counter that it prevents teenagers who have committed petty crimes from becoming repeat offenders whose crimes may become more severe. The program’s value in urban areas, they say, has been proven by Judge Corral’s success. “There are no instant criminals,” said Paula Nessel, the project coordinator of the National Law-Related Education Resource Center at the American Bar Association. “Courts like those in Los Angeles are not just handling kids who would straighten out on their own. These are kids somewhere in the middle of the span, and teen court is turning them around before it’s too late.”

We the Judges

I read with great interest the article by Stephen Adler, "We the Jury Find..." (Winter 1994/95). Mr. Adler accurately describes the dilemma of the American jury system. What he doesn't address, though, is the crucial role of the presiding judge and the rules of evidence that the judge must uphold. An attorney views his or her job as winning the case by convincing the jury. If, in fact, justice is also done, that is a considerable side benefit. Only the judge has a primary and exclusive interest in seeing that the jury has sufficient information to properly perform its fact-finding role. Only a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of cases that are filed in court every year ever become the subject of appellate review. Doctrines such as "harmless error" or "trial judge discretion" preclude actual review by appellate courts in all but the most egregious trial situations. It is the trial judge who essentially is the guardian of American jury rights.

Thus it is the trial judge who holds the responsibility to ensure that the jury understands the applicable law. To address one of Mr. Adler's concerns, jury instructions needn't be given only at the end of trial. There are always preliminary instructions that orient the newly sworn jury to its function and role in the trial. And it is then left to the discretion of the judge as to when and how often substantive instructions are given. In my court, I routinely give basic legal instruction at the beginning of a trial while reserving detailed analysis for my final instructions. I view my job as instructing the members of the jury in language they understand. It is our professional judiciary who have failed when arcane language ineffectively educates the jury on the law.

The trial judge's role is much greater than simply ensuring that the jury understands the language with which the law is conveyed. The judge's obligation is to convey to the jury the importance and solemnity of its role. The jury is the voice of the community. In personal injury negligence cases, which form the vast majority of

cases, it is the jury that decides not only what the evidence proves as to the historical “facts,” but also how a “reasonable person” would act and what constitutes “ordinary care.” It is also the judge’s responsibility to make the jury members understand that unless they abide by the “burden of proof” requirement of our law, they are, themselves, acting in a lawless manner. If the jury does not understand the evidence, the burden of proof cannot have been met and the law requires a verdict against the party with the burden. Thus the party with the burden must present the evidence in a manner in which dispassionate common citizens, the product of our American education system, can understand and evaluate. Unless the party with the burden does so, it should lose. If it has not conveyed evidence the jury could understand, and it does not lose, the trial judge has failed.

Unfortunately, modern trends are at odds with this goal of making the evidence understandable. Under the Federal Rules of Evidence, in effect since 1975, “expert” opinion evidence can be presented to a jury whenever it will “assist the trier of fact.” There is no restriction limiting expert testimony to situations where expert opinion is needed for a jury to understand the evidence. Accordingly, counsel can put a “scientific imprimatur” on evidence that can be as easily evaluated by the common sense of the jury. Even more significantly, the factual basis on which an expert opinion is based does not itself have to be presented in evidence. The factual basis on which an opinion is presented does not even have to be revealed as part of the expert’s testimony. The expert is permitted to rely on material which may even be inadmissible directly in evidence.

The Federal Rules contemplate that this bland presentation of opinion can be countered through skillful cross-examination. In cross-examination, however, the expert may present with impunity, as reasons for his or her opinion, material that could not otherwise be presented to the jury. Such material could include hearsay statements, another expert’s opinion, or conclusions of other investigators. It is extremely perilous for any attorney to choose to confront an expert in their field of expertise. The more common approach—the safer approach—is to present a different opinion from “better qualified” experts. The courtroom drama and the fact-finding function become transmogrified into a “battle of experts” and the jury lacks any factual basis for evaluating either opinion. This, more than any

other single factor, results in unjust and unreasonable jury verdicts. The sad fact is that this result is completely unnecessary.

It is the role of the jury to decide the facts. As the experience of a number of states shows, that role needn't be ceded to experts. In Pennsylvania and other states the factual basis of expert opinion must be presented in evidence. The opinion evidence must be expressed in a comprehensible manner to the jury. Where this involves teaching the jury the basics of the science involved, that must be presented.

It is commonly believed that jurors are incapable of deciding "scientific" or complex medical issues. After a lecture I recently gave to a group of medical students, one student asked whether I thought, in a medical malpractice case, half the jury should be composed of doctors since medical issues are complex and beyond the full comprehension of the normal layperson. Putting aside the fact that doctors often consider themselves much too busy to participate in our jury system, I asked the student whether he thought any given medical condition and its treatment was so complicated that it could not be explained to a patient and his immediate family before getting approval to treat. I explained that unless the physician was capable of reasonably explaining what was going to happen and what risks were involved it was impossible to obtain informed consent from the patient. The student agreed that it was possible to explain a medical condition to the patient and family. Since the doctor could explain everything to the family in a complicated, difficult, and emotionally charged situation, that same doctor could surely explain the same medical principles to twelve dispassionate jurors performing the public function of dispute resolution.

Judges should insist that the essential factual basis of expert opinion be independently offered into evidence. Where necessary, the rules of evidence should be changed to require this. It is society's obligation, an obligation vested in our trial judiciary, to present the information necessary for the jury to properly perform its function in dispute resolution. If we judges fulfill this obligation, we would do much to dissipate the unwarranted criticism of the greatest democratic institution ever created, the American jury.

Mark I. Bernstein, Judge, Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia

Defending Liberalism: A Reply to Philip Selznick

Liberal values are distinctly on the defensive these days in both the political and academic realms. In practical politics a torrent of antiliberalism rains down from the right: William Bennett warns of a crisis of values, William Kristol writes of the need for a “sociology of virtue” that attends to the need for character development, and Newt Gingrich calls the 1994 election a mandate to bury the “Great Society, counterculture, McGovernick” legacy which he believes has dominated American public policy. In the academy, the inadequacy of liberal “rights talk,” the thinness of liberal community, and the dearth of liberal civic virtues has long been a staple of political and moral debate. In both realms, the last 15 years or so have witnessed a remarkable shift away from interest in issues of fair distribution and toward a set of wide-ranging and deeply felt anxieties about our public moral culture.

These developments do not seem to me hard to explain or altogether misguided. I have no doubt that the style of democratic liberalism that has dominated elite institutions since the 1960s is in need of correction. I have no doubt that we liberals can and should do better than that post-Sixties, nonjudgmental, “lifestyles” liberalism whose hallmark is an insistence that public policy must be neutral on questions concerning the good life—as if it ever has been or could be!

Anxieties about the moral culture of liberal capitalistic democracy will not soon go away; they have been there from the beginning. The relative intensity of these anxieties at the moment does, however, present us with a profound philosophical and practical challenge: Can sensible, moderate liberals take seriously and respond positively to concerns over community, civic virtue, and moral character without falling prey to reactionary, romantic, or other forms of antiliberalism? Can we address these concerns about the moral culture from *within* a liberal framework, and without selling short the great strides we have made toward living up to old ideals of liberty, equality, and reasonable self-government? My strong conviction is that people of moderation and good will had better take these cultural anxieties seriously, if for no other reason than to avoid leaving sole possession of this field to populist demagogues like Patrick Buchanan. The practical task of liberalism today, it seems to me, is to define and

defend a moralistic but nonoppressive liberalism, one that treads between the nonjudgmental, “whatever makes you feel good” liberalism of the left and the angry authoritarianism of the populist right.

What I like most about Philip Selznick’s essay (Fall 1994) is his insistence that we address communitarian concerns seriously from within a liberal framework. Selznick exemplifies a sensible, moderate communitarianism, one that acknowledges and affirms the basic importance of liberal freedoms and constitutional limits on political power. He understands that sensible communitarians are critics not of liberalism *per se*, but rather of the thin, acontextual, neutralist variant of liberalism that many liberals long ago left behind.

Selznick’s criticisms of the recent excesses of some versions of liberalism are generally well taken, though I also have a few reservations. My first concerns Selznick’s discussion of the ideal of liberty. He is surely right to suggest that content-based restrictions on free speech cannot be altogether ruled out simply on the basis of assertions about the most abstract features of moral personality and the injunction to respect human dignity. Some speech has very little to do with expressing either human dignity or our capacity for reason. As examples Selznick mentions “verbal abuse by frustrated motorists” and “indecent exposure as a form of expression.” Having recently endured an excruciating cab ride to LaGuardia Airport, I would add much of what transpires on *The Howard Stern Show* to the list. Wherever we draw the lines, some speech lacks either intrinsic or instrumental value.

But that does not necessarily mean that we should, on communitarian grounds, allow the government to regulate such speech. Control over speech is one area where we have ample reason not to trust the government to draw the right distinctions. (Which Republican member of Congress would you nominate to head the relevant subcommittee?) If much of Howard Stern’s speech seems to me to be verbal pollution, others will say the same of Rush Limbaugh or the Rev. Al Sharpton. Broad protections for speech, covering some valueless as well as valuable speech, are justified because we regard the instruments of government as blunt and unreliable.

However, Selznick’s basic point remains: Defending robust freedoms of speech and the press requires more than deductions from

moral personality and human dignity. In justifying such freedoms and defining their limits, we surely need to take account of the lessons of history and the social consequences of different rules, including the consequences for our public moral culture. The fact is that there are no absolute rights. At the margins, at least, we must draw lines discriminating among kinds of speech (cigarette advertising vs. other kinds of speech) and that requires more than lofty moral abstractions.

A second concern of mine is that Selznick may overstate his critique of the liberal faith in reason. Practices of reason-giving and reason-demanding—so central to liberal politics—seem to me of great value. Reason-giving is a mark of respect for our fellow citizens and a way of honoring the authority of a better nature that we share at our best. Reason-demanding is a way of insisting that no person or government official may simply tyrannize over us: Power needs to be justified to those over whom it is exercised. Our courts, our legislatures, and many of our ordinary practices exemplify the aspiration to govern and be governed reasonably.

Selznick may not be altogether wrong to worry that demands for the public justification of government policies could lead us to ignore the unarticulated wisdom embodied in traditional practices and received institutions. “We may find, perhaps too late, that there were good reasons for preserving the core of conventional morality.” It should not be thought, however, that this is an argument against any particular reform. For if the “unarticulated knowledge” argument is an argument against *any* reform it must then be an argument against *all* reform (for all we know, every current social practice might embody some unarticulated wisdom). What Selznick really provides is an argument for caution in the reform of complex institutions.

The point is not that we should deny open homosexuals the right to serve in the armed forces, for example, but rather that the complexity and importance of the military as an institution may give us reasons to proceed cautiously and incrementally. (On the other hand, the experience of other countries might well suggest that we should just make the change and get it over with.) Selznick’s argument is one that liberals should take to heart, not because the task of protecting basic rights is complete—it is not—but because rights are rarely the

only thing at stake. And neither the contours of our rights nor the best way of vindicating them can be gleaned from abstract theory alone.

Finally, Selznick worries about “the current zest” for equality, which opposes all privileges and hierarchies, and becomes a leveling, nonjudgmental celebration of difference. The “fashionable politics of identity,” Selznick rightly argues, sows “misunderstanding and distrust,” tends to identify all forms of assimilation with cultural “genocide,” and is a prescription for fragmentation.

Selznick may be correct to see this strange politics—which embraces diversity and difference so indiscriminately—as growing out of an exaggerated, radicalized version of certain aspects of liberalism (e.g., the suspicion of power, the embrace of diversity). What is striking to me, however, is the extent to which the intellectual proponents of the politics of difference describe themselves not as liberals but as opponents of liberalism. They generally regard contemporary liberalism (as exemplified by John Rawls) as oppressive and “disciplinary” (as Michel Foucault, who seems to me the real godfather of this school of thought, would say). Those who espouse identity politics in the academy seem to recognize in this way that liberal theories of justice—with their faith in public reason, their concern for certain basic goods, and their close association with constitutionalism—really do represent a thicker conception of our social good than some liberals allow.

For my own part, it seems altogether good that our polity undertake reasonable measures to promote assimilation into basic liberal democratic values (if not through public schools, then in some other way). I am very glad that some groups (racists, Nazis, and others) feel marginalized and oppressed by the public culture of liberalism. I also think that even those liberals with a restrained political agenda should go ahead and admit that a society structured by liberal institutions and practices will tend to be a very definite type, a type that is far from equally hospitable to all religious views or conceptions of the good life. Proponents of radical diversity and the politics of difference implicitly recognize this “thickness” of modern liberalism, and their only mistake is thinking that we should try to overcome it.

Responsible communitarians and conservatives should avoid identifying liberalism with those political programs and theories that are least capable of responding to the moral anxieties that are now so widespread. Who really wants to deny, after all, that the liberal tradition is a great tradition? Its ideals of constitutionally limited government, the rule of law, respect for basic rights and liberties, and democratic political equality, are the greatest political achievements of the modern world. It behooves reasonable and responsible public figures and academics to make clear that the challenge before us now is not to overturn but to correct that great tradition, and perhaps to temper some of its recent excesses.

Stephen Macedo, Fellow, Princeton University Center for Human Values

Universalism Yes, Neutrality No

Philip Selznick's essay offers a very helpful contribution to recent debates concerning contemporary liberalism. I very much share his aspiration to expose deficiencies in liberal individualism while trying to show that one can do so without turning one's back on what is most precious in the liberal tradition. The argument pursued by contemporary liberals and their so-called "communitarian" critics has generated a lot of confusion and thus there is a real need for theoretical clarification.

A big part of the problem is that various critics, such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Michael Walzer, traced the inadequacy of liberal morality to its universalism, and this seemed to suggest that one ought to embrace particularism as a counter-morality, invoking community as the ultimate moral standard. However legitimate concerns about modern individualism may be, communitarianism would indeed be highly suspect if it served as a "blank check," giving moral sanction to any assertion of communal identity. Selznick is entirely right when he insists that we must avoid this illiberal outcome. For instance, on a recent holiday I saw a fellow tourist, a teenage girl who was also a fellow Canadian, wearing a T-shirt that read: "Proud to be Serbian." Rather than rushing to celebrate this as

an admirable display of devotion to community, one might want to give some thought about what exactly Serbians as Serbians have reason to be proud of at present. As Selznick again rightly points out in his article, the appeal to communal identity as such could be taken as giving encouragement to the most extreme or least reasonable aspects of the multicultural movement, with its potentially divisive and parochializing commitment to “identity politics,” and this would be most unfortunate.

In fact, the strongest aspect of communitarian criticisms of liberal theory is located elsewhere. As Michael Sandel writes in a persuasive critique of Rawls published in the May 1994 issue of the *Harvard Law Review*, it was *not* the intention of critics such as himself to sanctify community as the ultimate standard of right; rather, the intention was to highlight issues of substantive good that are shunned on principle by proponents of neutralist liberalism such as John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, and their followers. Selznick makes a similar point when he says that the obsession with moral autonomy that one finds in theorists like Dworkin renders liberalism incapable of attending to broader concerns about the moral environment.

There is indeed much to be concerned about as one surveys the social landscape of contemporary liberal societies: anemic citizenship, a brutalizing mass culture, the resort to hyper-individualistic fantasy and escapism, the increasing brittleness of basic social institutions like the family, the world of therapy and self-preoccupation associated with Christopher Lasch’s “culture of narcissism,” and so on. Ambitious concerns of these sorts need to be addressed by theory. But from the standpoint of Dworkinian or Rawlsian liberalism, one must avoid passing robust judgment on such phenomena, for they are the outcome of moral choice and free moral agency by responsible adults. From my own point of view (and, I think, Selznick’s as well), this refusal by the theorist to encroach upon the space of moral autonomy represents a tremendous abdication of the theorist’s calling, namely to ask fearlessly ambitious questions about the substance of life in the societies we now inhabit.

It doesn’t follow that we should have ready at hand some communitarian alternative that would magically undo all that we find unsatisfying in the existing social order. Even MacIntyre, in a

recently published interview with Giovanna Borradori, insists: “I do not believe in ideals or forms of community as a nostrum for contemporary social ills. I give my political loyalty to no program.” To be sure, he certainly welcomes possibilities of preserving and fostering forms of local community life that can be sustained in the face of the strong individualizing tendencies of liberal modernity. What he is saying, however, is that he is opposed—and so he should be—to the idea that we should presume to turn these legitimate concerns about modern individualism into a new counter-ideology to liberalism—that is, a new “ism.” It is in the same spirit that I welcome communitarianism as a critical challenge to liberal dogmas, not as the source of a new ideology.

Ronald Beiner, Professor of political science, University of Toronto

*There was an editorial error in Hans Joas's "Communitarianism in Germany" (Winter 1994/95). On p. 25, line 6 from the bottom, the text should have read, "But, on the other hand, the feeling that the task of reunification could **not** be solved through individualist liberalism became stronger." We apologize for the mistake.*

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