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BRINGING DEMOCRACY BACK IN

Universalistic Solidarity and the Civil Sphere

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IN THE LAST 18 MONTHS, as one nation after another has embarked on the long and difficult road to a liberal and responsive social order, "democracy" has once again become a fashionable term. In sociology, this revival could lead to a disciplinary crisis, for about democracy contemporary sociology has precious little to say. When democracy was sociology's concern, moreover, it was never successfully theorized.

In the days of the cold war, ironically perhaps, social scientists considered democracy to be something rather easily achieved, a heritage that the world deserved and would eventually receive. It was conceptualized as a necessary implication of the classical dichotomies that structured the field, of Gesell-schaft as compared with Gemeinschaft, of modernity in contrast with traditionalism. We would become democratic by default, by virtue simply of our modernity. Systematic distinctions were rarely made within the concept of modernity itself. Nondemocratic societies were understood simply as not yet modern enough.

Two languages informed this postwar discourse. One stressed efficiency. Democracy was adaptive because it was flexible. Because it was flexible, it would survive. It was an evolutionary universal (Parsons 1963). The other vocabulary was taken from the voluntary rationality of the Enlightenment. In the postwar world, democracy was formally introduced into other nations by the Allies; constitutions were put into place, legal guidelines established. These transformative expectations, it was believed, would be cherished and followed in due course (Parsons 1971).

We see now that these earlier efforts failed to understand the requisites of democracy. They were either technocratic and determinist (e.g., Lerner 1958, p. 40; Rostow 1960, p. 133) or hopelessly rationalist and optimistic (Lipset 1960, pp. 27-63). To continue such theorizing in the present day is not only anachronistic, it is also irresponsible.
THE TURN TOWARD "REALISM"

In the last two decades, we have learned that this is not, after all, the best of all possible worlds and that democracy does not come easily. This education has been a salutary one, but the shift in social scientific understanding that has accompanied it has not been equally so. Cynicism has replaced optimism, materialism and "realism" have replaced the concern with morality (Callins 1975). Instead of exploring politics, social scientists now explore society. They investigate the social origins of political arrangements (Moscovici 1966) and deconstruct the effects of constitution and political norms (e.g., Dore 1969). Conflicts theories (Dahlendorf 1979) have replaced theories about the possibility of social integration. Even when the specificity of politics is acknowledged, the independent state is conceived of in a purely instrumental way (Skocpol 1979). It is a power bloc of its own, one more environment within which egocentric interest can be pursued (Evans et al. 1985).

This does not mean that political ideals have disappeared from the sociological discourse about politics. It means that they are now pursued in a "tough-minded" way. Democracy is considered merely a formal arrangement. What is important is the distribution of power and force, the balance of material resources. Equality has become the central focus, class conflict and power structure the topics of elaboration. If there is unequal economic or political power, it is assumed, dominant groups will pursue their interests by any available means. It means that count, not ends. It is concrete goals that matter, not the moral frameworks that can possibly frame them.

Citizenship results from class struggle. Rights cannot be conceptualized in an independent way. Democracy can be explained only as the product of a truce between conflict groups that have achieved relative but temporary parity (Rex 1961), a political manifestation of capitalism that provides "the material bases of consent" (Przeworski 1985, pp. 135-70).

These who write about the political condition of contemporary societies express little confidence in the possibilities for democracy. When Marcuse (1965) attacked capitalist democracies as one-dimensional and totalitarian, he was considered a radical iconoclast. Thirty years later, Foucault has gained increasing wide acceptance for a theory that, while more sophisticated and precise, emphasizes the same repressive qualities in Western societies while virtually ignoring the meaning of a democratic state (e.g., Foucault 1979, 1980). Citizens of Western societies are seen as monitored, as subject to surveillance (Giddens 1981). They are selfish and do not engage in public life (Sennett 1977, Habermas 1989). When democratic discourse does become the focus of analysis, it is conceived of as ideology, not as values, as simply another means to pursue strategic ends (Edelman 1964; Thompson 1984). Debunking rhetoric, of course, can pretentious authority down to size. It has always been a mainstay of democratic politics. Without more of a theoretical perspective on democratic and authoritarian struggles, however, social scientific understanding cannot be gained. Social science thinking about democratic societies has become part of the practice of democratic politics. Under these conditions, the development of a realistic theory of democratic societies has become impossible.

THE TRADITION OF THRASTMACHUS

We are left with the tradition of Thrasymachus, for whom one of the first conflict theorists wrote an essay in praise (Dahrendorf 1969). Thrasymachus provided the foil for Plato, Against Socrates' vision of an ideal and transcendent justice, he insisted on base motives and the necessary cruelty of political life. "In all else alike, 'right' has the same meaning, namely what is for the interest of the party established in power, and that is the strongest" (Plato 1965, chap. 3, p. 18). This handkerchief cartoon about Themistocles clearly important. It is reflected in the long tradition of normative political theory that has insisted that democracy depends on the separation of powers. The ever practical Aristotle (1963, The Politics, Book 4, sect. E, chap. 14) argued against Plato's idealism that well-defined constitutions would have to be divided against themselves. More specifically, Montesquieu (1727, The Spirit of Laws, Book 1, chap. 4, p. 202) believed that, if independent institutions were not pitted against each other, tyranny, arbitrary control, and "all the violence of the oppressor" would be the result. In The Federalist Papers, Hamilton and Madison said much the same.

Classical social science writing about democracy has largely followed a similar path. Marx (1848-1862) economized Thrasymachus when he argued that democracy was a sham because classes had grossly unequal economic power, concluding that class power had to be separated from political governance. Weber (1917-1928) sociologized him when he argued that democracy depended on the creation of powerful counterweights to state bureaucracies, on the emergence of political demagogues and ruthless party organizations. Following upon Marx and Weber, Michels (1911-1929) argued that socialist parties and unions became oligarchic because their leaders could monopolize the organization's material resources. When Lipset, Coleman, and Dow wrote Union Democracy (1956)—the most important single sociological study of democracy in the postwar era—they followed in Michels' footsteps. Arguing that organizational democracy can be defined as the opportunity for effective competition between groups, they
demonstrated that such competition is possible only if the means of struggle are pluralized.
This line of thinking is certainly essential to any realistic thinking about democracy. The reason is that it is an important antidote to the ideological innocence and theoretical simplification of earlier unanimity thought. The self-interested dimension of human action must be firmly respected, as must the significantly self-aggrandizing character of every social group. It is for this reason that sustained participatory democracy in any large organization (Mansbridge 1980, pp. 785-89) is impossible. Oligarchies form in every organization. If these elites are not given what they consider their due, they will seek to dominate society in turn. Every serious theory of democracy must cope with this fact. Democracies depend on social structures that allow egoism to be pursued but that make the aggregation of egoism impossible. No society can prevent the formation of elites; a society will be democratic, however, to the extent that the interests of these elites can be differentiated in a manner that makes them competitive rather than convergent (Elitzion-Vekry 1980; Alexander and Colonoy 1980). If society cannot prevent elite formation, it can prevent the misappropriation of power and resources by any single elite (Wuzler 1983).

POLITICS AS A SYMBOLIC CODE

Elite conflict and structural differentiation cannot, however, form the exclusive point of our interest. The tradition of Thrasymachus is not adequate to understand politics, much less the phenomenon of political democracy. Within its narrow confines, we cannot understand the interior domain—the realm of feeling, moral sense, and perception—that makes living together possible. We cannot illuminate the mysterious process by which citizens agree to uphold rules whose utility they scarcely understand. The tradition of Thrasymachus explores only the 'base' of politics. But power is a medium of communication, not simply a goal of interested action or a means of coercion. It has a symbolic code, not only a material base (Parsons 1969).

To understand this code, we must introduce a normative and cultural dimension into our theory of democratic society. This will mean returning to some earlier thinking about normative and cultural integration and trying to understand it in new ways. It will also mean connecting our discussion of politics to other important and contemporary intellectual themes (Alexander 1988a; Alexander and Selman 1990).

Because politics has reference to a symbolic code, it can never be simply situational, but a generalized dimension as well. This generalized reference makes politics not only contingent and rational but stylized and prescribed. To understand it, we need anthropological concepts about sacred and rational and structural theories of language and codes. The symbolic medium of politics is a language that political actors themselves do not fully understand. It is not only the instrument of social structure, but a deep symbolic structure. What Lévi-Strauss (1963, p. 50) has said about the code of kinship, we can say about the language of politics: 'It exists only in human consciousness; it is an arbitrary system of representation, not the spontaneous development of a real situation.'

There is a tradition of contemporary political theory—often called 'normative' in contrast with 'empirical' or 'behavioral'—that similarly rejects the consideration of politics as utilitarian terms alone. Drawing inspiration from the ancient Greek Polis, thinkers like Arendt (1958), Whin (1960), and MacIntyre (1981) describe democracy as a participatory political culture whose citizens have a commitment to the public interest that transcends private and egoistic concerns. They call for a 'politics of vision' and criticize contemporary politics as instrumental from the perspective of this ideal, democratic norm. Their communistic approach argues that democracy can be sustained only if a sense of altruistic civic virtue permeates political life.

The problem here is not with the emphasis on morality and internal commitments or with the injection into political theory of explicit normative criteria. The problem is with the manner in which these commitments and criteria are understood. The normative aspirations of this tradition are confined with behavioral possibilities, the moral ought is confused with the empirical (i.e., a political life is not fully participatory, this tradition judges it to be egotistical and instrumental, ruled by interests rather than values. If it is not virtuous in a liberal or progressive sense, it is judged to be without any reference to any conception of virtue at all. Similarly problems derive from sociological reactions to political utilitarianism. When Belth (Belth et al., 1985) demands new 'habits of the heart,' and Bell (1976) a new 'public household,' they too draw upon this romantic conception of the possibility for a powerful and controlling civic virtue. While morally admirable and politically provocative, such thinking seems not only unipan but a bit sociologically naive. If there is to be a more value-oriented conception of democratic politics, it must vary from a more realistic conception of the difficulties and challenges of complex societies. Self-interest and conflict will never give way to some all-embracing communal ideal. Indeed, the more democratic a society, the more it allows groups to define their own specific ways of life and legitimates the inevitable conflicts of interest that arise between them. Political consensus can never be brought to bear in a manner that neutralizes particular group
DEMOCRACY AND SYMBOLIC UNIVERSALS

The cultural reference of politics is a constant. In particular situations, there is always some reference to generalized codes. In thinking about political democracy, however, the differential capacity to make these references becomes particularly salient, for the specific content of the reference can be defined in various ways. Democracy depends on the regulation of diverse particular actions by rules that are broadly accepted and hence inclusive. If the cultural reference of action does not have a far-reaching scope, it cannot be inclusive in effect: because it is narrowly defined, it will be exclusive. The more general the symbolic reference to which specific actions are subject, moreover, the more they can be subject to demands for justification. These demands are made in relationship to the general restraints that are acknowledged by participants in guiding their specific actions. The more general the scope and inclusiveness of the cultural reference, therefore, the more action can be subject to criticism and reformulation.

Breath of scope and inclusiveness of effect can be understood in terms of the contrast between universalism and particularism. I will spend some time discussing this contrast, both because I believe it to be so central to any conception of democratic politics and also because the contrast seems largely to have disappeared from the discussion that still remains of political culture. 10

Aristotle (1963, p. 47) first defined this contrast in terms of the qualities of actual things.

Now of actual things some are universal, others particular. I call universal that which is by its nature predicated of a number of things and particular that which is not "man," for instance, is a universal, Callias is a particular.

If one relates to Callias as a "man," one judges him according to criteria that are broad, general, and all embracing. This cultural reference creates a psychological or intellectual separation from the particular situation within which Callias is encountered, allowing one to compare Callias's actions with others and to develop a critical perspective. If one relates to Callias simply under the nobis "Callias," by contrast, one employs categories of understanding that are peculiar to this particular situation alone. The cultural reference reflects Callias's uniqueness. This particularism may encourage intimacy, but it does not allow the separation from situational immediacy that encourages critical judgment.

This contrast between universalism and particularism has been intrinsic to every significant effort to understand the culture of critical social action.
and democratic and inclusive societies. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel (1807/1977) described human development as involving the perception of ever more universalistic categories, each of which "would include under a higher and more general name the particular antithesis of the preceding stage. Because Hegel believed the spirit of God to be even more general and inclusive than the reason of man, he described the end point of human development as the regulation of every particular interaction and social institution by a dual reference to this powerful universal force. If such regulation, or interpretation, were achieved, there would be the integration of the particular and universal, which Hegel called the "concrete universal."

When Parsons formulated his pattern-variable scheme (e.g., Parsons 1951), the same distinction was stated in a less metaphorical way. He argued that interactions are regulated by norms that specify the dimensions of universalism and particularism with great precision. Norms may allow more or less affect and more or less diffuseness in role obligations. They may define an interaction as oriented more to self or other concerns. To the degree that normative orientations are more social, less diffuse, and more other oriented, they are more universalistic. Parsons and others demonstrated that the tension between universalistic and particular patterns is central to a wide range of social situations, from parent-child and doctor-patient interactions (Parsons 1951; Barber 1980) to race relations (Williams 1960) and the structure of national communities (Lippitt 1963, pp. 257-312).

The most important psychological studies of human development have focused on the transition from particularistic to universalistic capacities. While its direct implications for membership in this broader society requires. By referring to this more generalized element, children can take the same attitude toward their own behavior as they do to others', which is precisely what following rules means. Such universalism allows them to be spontaneous play in organized games. The capacity for generalized reference also allows individual flexibility and critical, innovative behavior.

By referring to these studies in psychological development, I do not mean to suggest a causal relationship between socialization and democratic culture. It is evident that most individuals in most societies develop the capacities for universalistic action and judgment, whereas only a few societies have democratic political systems. I do want to suggest, however, that there is a significant homology between these seminal studies and the more general thinking that must be done about political culture and democratic society. Because these psychological theorists were concerned with cooperation and reasoning, they had to focus on the tension between universalism and particularism. This contrast between general and inclusive orientations, and
situationally specific and exclusive ones, illuminates a central distinction in human behavior. When actors are engaged in practical politics at the expense of general principles, when they exercise personalized judgments without reference to office obligations, when they are guided by prejudice rather than moral respect, when they act for self-interest alone without reference to higher laws, when they accept capricious authority without demanding justification or when authorities refuse to recognize the legitimacy of demands for justification when they are made—in all these situations actors are behaving in particularistic rather than universalistic ways. While these actors no doubt possess the psychological capacity for generalization, it has not informed their practice as members of the political community.

UNIVERSALISM AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The concept of universalism is applied to such political communities as the abstract society, civil society, and citizenship. It is unfortunate that, in the recent and very promising theoretical discussion about civil society that has emerged from within post-Marxist political theory (e.g., Keesing 1986a, 1988b), the close connection between civil society and cultural universalism has not been made. For universalistic attitudes and codes are conceptualized in political communities by the construction of an independent civil sphere, with the civility and citizenship that this implies. Civility implies respect for others, and control of oneself and also the adherence to a social code of behavior. Freud (1930) 1961 argued that civilization depends on the substitution of ego-idealistic and simplified modes of participation for the direct emotional gratification of interaction; only in this way could supra-familial ties be established and the sphere of cooperation enlarged. Elias (1958 1987) traced the emergence of such control and refinement in a more historical way, showing how important it was to the construction of the family of early nation-states and how it allowed broad social classes to be established and political hierarchies to emerge.

In his earlier response to the rationalization and individualization of contract theory, Adam Ferguson (1767) 1966 argued that an increase in self-control and “subtlety,” and a decrease in brute impulse, were crucial to the “absence of the moral respect, of personal regard for law, of protection of property, and democratic regulation of authority. Hirschman (1977) has shown that, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there emerged a powerful backlash against the passionate glory seeking and here worship of the late middle ages. Only by softening and polishing the manners of men, by creating psychological and hence social calm, could the arbitrariness of rulers be curbed by social rules and stable political order be achieved. Hirschman has shown that, for thinkers like Montesquieu, democratic convolutions and the separation of powers would be one result.

It is often recognized that similar themes—civility, civil society, universalism, and citizenship—have also been central to certain traditions of social science. Weber (1917) 1968, pp. 1212-372 argued that modern legal-rational societies depended upon the increasing “rationalization” that occurred for the first time in the city-states of the late middle ages. Christianity defined all men as brethren in the abstract community of Christ, rejecting ethnic or even national ties as valid criteria for community membership. Only because of the universalism of this cultural reference, Weber believed, were Western cities able to define urban dwellers as citizens, in principle extending that status to every male inhabitant—of the city. In Eastern or ancient cities, by contrast, membership was defined irreversibly by family, ethnic, or class ties.

Marshall (1985) took the increasing density and power of these enlarged group ties as the dynamic factor in the expansion of citizenship. In the eighteenth century, citizenship was a crucial innovation in social organization, yet it entitled members of a national society simply to the protection of their legal rights. In the nineteenth century, with the emergence of nationalism and demands for recognition by lower classes, cross-group solidarity was strengthened, and citizenship was extended to the political right to vote of all community members. In the twentieth century, with its great industrializing experiences like World Wars I and II, citizenship came to guarantee social and not just legal and political rights. Members of the newly developed “welfare state” had the ability to make legitimate demands for a wide range of educational and social services (see Bendix 1964).

When Parsons (1967, 1977, pp. 90-121) did set out to reformulate Marshall’s theory in a manner that tied it directly to the expansion of social solidarity, increased market relationships, political participation, and religious activism are not only significant in themselves but contribute to the construction of an independent solidarity sphere of society, which Parsons defined as the societal community. More specifically integrative processes are also involved, such as geographical and social mobility, intermarriage, migration, education, and the emergence of new forms of mass communication. For all of these reasons, the intensity and frequency of interaction increases; members of national societies see themselves as men like one another; cross-group ties become closer; and the societal community expands. Modernizing social change must be defined, therefore, not only as shifting the economic,
political, or value spheres but as increasing inclusion via the societal community. In earlier and more simple societies, membership in the community was defined by the particularism of kinship and blood. For most members of feudal societies, it did not extend past the limits of immediate consanguinity (Braudel 1996). With the construction of a civil society, these particularistic definitions of membership are broken through; they are replaced by abstract criteria that emphasize simple humanity and participation in the nation-state. Citizenship, then, can be understood as a form of social organization that is anchored in universalistic norms of community that define every member as equally worthy of respect. These are highly generalized ties and abstract and differentiated rules that regulate the political game. Members of a civil society can refer to these universalistic values to gain distance from their immediate relationships, in order to change them or criticize them.

I am not suggesting here that a national community should be understood simply as a civil society, any more than it should be understood as a capitalist society, a nation-state, or a cultural community. Civil society must be understood analytically, not concretely. It is not a sphere that one can touch or see, any more than is the sphere of political power, economic production, or cultural life. It is a dimension that is organized by the fact that it subjects those who are its members to distinctive kinds of obligations and acts, which can be distinguished from, and are often in conflict with, those of economic, political, and cultural ideology. The analytic nature of this sphere means that civil society can be understood as interpreting with, or permeating, these other spheres, just as the pressures of the latter are often interpreted into public life.

Citizens appear to be acting in terms of situational interest; in fact, they are part of a densely structured cultural world. They are acting within a public reality that is the product of a centuries-long civilizing process. They are disciplined by this world even when they feel themselves free; indeed, it is the discipline of their universalistic community that makes them free. The process of universalization is one in which the individuals of the community are first taught and then socialized to accept and understand the norms of the community, and to participate in the political life of the community, even when they feel themselves free. The process of universalization is one in which the individuals of the community are first taught and then socialized to accept and understand the norms of the community, and to participate in the political life of the community, even when they feel themselves free. The process of universalization is one in which the individuals of the community are first taught and then socialized to accept and understand the norms of the community, and to participate in the political life of the community, even when they feel themselves free. The process of universalization is one in which the individuals of the community are first taught and then socialized to accept and understand the norms of the community, and to participate in the political life of the community, even when they feel themselves free.

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to an actual government, indeed, would be to abandon universalism for the particularism of a petty or state. Civil society implies something quite different. It means trust in the universalistic values that abstract from any particular society and that provide critical leverage against particular historical actors. It guarantees the existence of a public, not public consensus or consent. Because of their trust in a higher universal order, citizens continually make demands for authorities to justify their actions. The higher order embodies ideal justice; because earthly authorities must inevitably violate this ideal norm, moral outrage is a continual result. In strong civil societies, then, distrust of authoritative action and political conflict are more prominent. Yet it is this very separation from the endorsement of particular arrangements that makes democracy possible. Because the ultimate loyalty of citizens is to an overarching rule rather than to the outcome of any particular game, policies and officeholders can be changed, though the process may be difficult and subject to continual contestation (see Alexander 1998; Dumbrell 1983).

Constitutions are phenomena that have been almost completely neglected by political sociologists, not only in its most recent but in its earlier phase. Yet it is a constitution that codifies these universalistic rules, in a legal form that authorizes democratic succession and political dissent. With the exception of legal proceedings, however, when citizens evoke the constitution, it is not to its detailed codifications that they refer; it is to the broad and general cultural standards in relation to which constitutions are signed. In a democratic society, these standards are the codes of the political language. If citizens evoke the constitution, it is because their political speech has become difficult. The constitution is a pretext; by referring to it, they are trying to reach recalcitrant citizens to speak.

THE PROMISE OF A MULTIDIMENSIONAL THEORY

In their reaction against the naïveté of early positivist theorizing about democracy and social integration, contemporary social scientists have placed a greater emphasis on the role of cultural factors in shaping political behavior. They have argued that society is not simply a collection of individuals, but rather a complex interaction of different types of socialization. The positive development of this intellectual development is that it has brought us back into the study of a social world, with every serious theory of democracy that content. No matter how multidimensional the
theory, no matter how central a role it is that cultural codes play, it is important to recognize that objectives always will form and that elites inevitably will seek to spread their domination. Democracy will survive only if elite domains can be separated into different spheres. Interpreted in this way, then, the very efforts that elites and masses make to maintain control over a given sphere of life will involve an effort to maintain the differentiation of each institutional domain. Because elite differentiation prevents monopoly, moreover, the struggles for justice in the distribution of different kinds of institutional resources will have a better chance to succeed.16

Political realists, however, can maintain outside the narrow confines of materialism and conflict theory. It is possible to understand the requisites of democracy in more multidimensional terms. Power is more than its material base; it is also a medium of communication. Every political action has a generalized reference, a relation to meaning that goes beyond the exigencies of its specific situation. For there to be a democracy, this cultural framework for power must be articulated in distinctly universal terms. Individuals cannot be seen narrowly, in terms of their particular economic, ethnic, religious, or regional groups alone. Political actors must also be seen in much broader terms, as members of a universal community in which every participant has the same legal, political, and moral status. This universalistic community is a civil society, and the egalitarian status is citizenship. Civil society and citizenship allow public life.

Once the concept of a universalistic civil society has been introduced, it is possible to see how the realists' and idealists' approaches to democracy can be brought together. Civil society can be understood not just as a realm of solidarity and cultural universalism but also as an institutionalized and differentiated social sphere. Most critically, of course, it is differentiated from the state. In a democracy, leaders of the state cannot legally control the activities of civil society, although they often seek informally to do so. Leaders are forced, rather, to participate in public life as citizens. Although they typically bring to this participation unusual resources, like personal authority and prestige, they must confront in this civil arena with elites who possess strategic resources of other kinds. For civil society is also differentiated from other, nonpolitical domains, such as the economic and the religious. These elites too will bring special resources to bear on their efforts to persuade fellow citizens, efforts that take the form of organizing political groups, lobbying power brokers, mobilizing mass educational efforts, and running election campaigns. Finally, civil society is not without its own elites — or without its particular institutional resources. Insofar as they are relatively differentiated, the media of mass communication speak for the social community, revealing its "public opinion."17 The legal apparatus articulates the specific demands of civil society, demands that are backed up by force and that, so long as the democratic constitution is maintained, cannot be denied.

These are the social requisites of democracy, in an ideal-typical sense. Any other look at real societies reveals, of course, that these are never fully achieved. The point of this discussion has been to suggest ways to look for the reasons they are not achieved. The more complex and the more differentiated societies become, the more they depend upon centralized and bureaucratic power to provide infrastructures and coordination. Bureaucratic power, however, is always nonuniversalistic at the top. At the head of every government bureaucracy there stands a personal leader who will develop personal authority in a particularistic way. In times of social crisis, these tendencies for personal domination exacerbate the movements to anti-civil social polarization. When rapid social change wrenches the social fabric, the societal community becomes polarized into different camps, left and right, modern and traditional, secular and sacred. As particularistic ideologies become stronger and power blocs threaten the autonomy of different institutional domains, crises emerge that threaten to tear society apart. The struggle to maintain democracy is the struggle to sustain the cohesion and autonomy of civil society. Democracy is preserved only if common ground is sustained, if it is proven possible to entrench the generalized, universalistic bonds that allow critical reflection to be sustained without sacrificing social solidarity.

NOTES

1. Despite its emphasis on systemic power, Lipset's approach to democracy critiques just this kind of anarchistic complexity. In his "Politics as a Social System," (1960), he writes, for example: "A political system's ability to absorb social conflict has to increase when society becomes more complex and conflict-ridden. The political system then absorbs these conflicts from being causes of simple opposition to being causes of regulation, attitudinal struggles to influence the decision-making centers."

2. In the course of that debate denoted to "power structure analysis," which involves arguments about such topics as class versus elite formation in cities international and management versus property control in corporations — there is scarcely any indication that in many capitals societies have their bi-cultural role, and the conflicts they produce, the society within a democratic political order.

Although the kind of coercion I am making here has been the subject of concern in the minds of Marcuse and, more recently, has become a growing number of post-Marxist critics of "critical theory," J. D. Cohen (1992) successfully argues that the exclusive focus on class antagonism is fundamentally mistaken: because it misunderstands civil society as a multi-structure (independent or normative institution rather than a self-organizing) in a more broadly cultural sense. Charles I. Y. (1989, p. 86) has put the argument in even more essential terms, warning why "there is an as yet little realization" for the analysis of political freedom and democracy among social and political scientists.
10. This difference is one of the principal drawbacks of the semantic emphasis on the primary that I proved above. Because economics largely ignore the key issues of the relation between symbols and social existence, the process of the primary remains between these two levels—whether culture is constitutive and particularistic, critical and oppressive—never seriously discussed. One who

11. This emphasis of Parsons, of course, does not mean Durkheim's emphasis on solidarity, as the key variable in modern society. In the work on personality, civilization, and social integration, the major link between the original Durkheimian argument and more contemporary sociological arguments (see, e.g., Shils 1971a, 1973b, Geertz 1973) related the case of Parsons and Shils to the contemporary modernization of Third World society, and in his 1973 work has elaborated some of the perspectives and frameworks for the comprehensive analysis of historical civilizations.

In contrast to the explicitly social framework of Max Weber, the evolutionary and generally nonexistent cast of the Parsonsian theory of society has made its own sociopolitical implications for a theory of the social world more difficult to discern. Still, the social-sociopolitical implication of this dimension of Parsons's work are not explicit to trace (see this instead, see Hunt 1981). I have developed a revised "functionalist" model of structure and society, one that gives primary place to a more historical framework of political power and social cohesion, in Allescher (1988a).

12. For a discussion of how a kind of anomic conformity is essential to English democracy, see Lave (1987).

13. For a complete analysis of anomie as the source for some of the earliest thinking about individual activities with political economy, see Mayhew (1986).

14. This is to say that the problem of the meaning of anomie is a "generative" principle of anomie. He argues that rights cannot be legislated out of history or that the "symbolic" connection or right is manifest in . . . the irreversibility of the irreversibility of right is an artifact of social structure. In other words, the symbolic character of rights in cultural differentiation and social reality form means that it is always in tension with the inter-related objective structures of society.

15. For important exceptions, see Fromm (1954) and Pfeffer (1980).

16. Weber (1958) has dealt with the process in a preliminary and opposite manner in the work of Jowett. While a work of political theory, this book is vital to any sociological understandings of democracy, social differentiation, and civil society.

17. This perspective on the concept of anomie is elaborated in Alexander (1981). Political opinion polls can be seen as triggering, Ford's international mobilization of civil society. The fact that they clarify and independently validate political which about a concern issue that successfully mobilizes on the actors of political action is demonstrated in Lave and Lave (1987).

REFERENCES


Chapter 10

THE POLITICS OF THEORY AND THE LIMITS OF ACADEMY

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IN THE UNITED STATES, we suffer a more restricted definition of the social role of intellectuals. It is true, of course, that the United States has been home to the many varieties of intellectuals discussed by others in the preceding chapters—grant intellectuals in the French sense, the technical intelligentsia and managers to which New Class theory refers, and organic intellectuals of the dominant and popular classes.

Nevertheless, in the post-World War II period, the most conspicuous intellectuals in the United States have been university professors. As Flexner reminds us, university-based intellectuals in the 1930s were among the most important of the public intellectuals who were to have perfected the American Dream by forming away social evil. Certainly, the university was, outside the business sector, the most radically transformed and expanded institution in the United States after the world war. It was central to this period of American history in at least four important respects: an institutional home for the sciences (including social sciences), which were to produce the knowledge of America's golden age; as a source of a promoted level of economic opportunity for the added millions pursuing a higher education; as repository of ideas about how society could be—so many things to so many people; equally a source of hope and despair; no less equally to those who would use it to make America "Number One" at those—beginning with the authors of SDS's Port Huron Statement in 1962—who protested all that was wrong in such an imperial impulse.

Thus, in the United States, the intellectual is whom one must turn to in the academic intellectual. The academy is where intellectuals are usually bred. In the United States, it is a more common experience for an intellectual to have a university appointment than it is anywhere else. In the last years of the century, we are emasculated in a public forum by the technical, interest and politics of the American academic intellectual. As a result, the politics