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Solidarity, Democracy, Association

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We are grateful for the comments our paper has provoked – both those published here and those provided in other venues. Spurred in part by them, we have refined our original views in several ways. These refinements include an even starker view of the ways in which current social and economic change limit the appeal of traditional social democratic strategies of democratic revival, and greater clarity on the conditions under which associative artifaction is appropriate. More positively, they include as well arguments for the moral and functional appeal of the 'weaker' organizations, and more transient arenas of democratic deliberation, such artifaction would facilitate.

More clearly than in the original paper, we also see the question of whether associative democracy is a new form of constitutional order or merely a new strategy within the current one to be an empirical one; its answer goes less to the basic conception than to the extent of its adoption. With matters of kind thus reduced to matters of degree, we also permit ourselves a more optimistic view on problems in state capacity – both regarding extant demands on the state and those that artifaction of the associative environment would place. Again more clearly than in the original paper, we now see those problems dynamically related to, and in part solved by, the gradual and structured promotion of associative solutions to social problems we more generally recommend. Such promotion would expand the range of areas in which popular democratic sovereignty could be effected (if not directly by the state itself), and gradually redefine the state's role from 'first problem-solver' to 'first organizer of social capacities for their solution' – a role less taxing than the one it inadequately performs at present. The result of these refinements, finally, *is* a matter of kind – a view of associative democracy less as an amendment to traditional social democratic strategies than as a synthesis of social democracy and radical democracy.

The fact of some change in our own views, along with limitations of space and the diffuse and wide-ranging character of the comments published here, dictates our strategy of response to those comments. Rather than respond to them one by one, or attempt an exhaustive canvass of the varied issues they raise, we intend simply to state our current thinking about associative democracy. As we do so, however, we shall emphasize three points that distinguish our current thinking from that reflected in the original essay and that correspond to three concerns raised in the replies in this volume.

One concern is that our conception of democracy is too 'rich' and expansive. That conception self-consciously incorporates substantively egalitarian and procedurally democratic elements. While each is attractive as a component of a political philosophy, many commentators noted that the components may not be compatible in practice. The first section (Egalitarianism and Democracy) speaks to this concern, both by redescribing our normative ambitions and by indicating their relationship to the notion of associative democracy we advance. More than in our original paper, again, we emphasize the roots of the associative democratic conception in both egalitarian and radical democratic political traditions. We also argue that the current troubles of social democracy may create an especially promising opportunity for unifying those traditions. Far from rendering them practically incompatible, present circumstance suggests that they may be mutually supporting – in particular, that equality may depend on deepening democracy.

A second concern is the relationship of associative democracy to corporatism. With an enthusiasm or alarm that we find equally misguided, many commentators read our paper as proposing 'corporatism for America'. Somewhat more plausibly, others understand us to be advancing a postmodern corporatism expanded to include bargaining partners beyond the traditional social partners of labor and capital, and policy arenas beyond the economy. In the next two sections ('Social Democracy and its Discontents' and 'What is to be Done?'), we seek to distinguish associative democracy from these corporatist interpretations. 'Social Democracy and its Discontents' offers a diagnosis of the crisis of social democracy, and in so doing explains why any simple rejuvenation or inclusion-minded reform of corporatism is not a promising political project. Moreover, in restating the associative democratic project, 'What is to be Done?' emphasizes elements of that project that do not fit the renewed corporatism picture – in particular the idea of *deliberative arenas* for politics that do not privilege the given preferences of actors or their current organization.

A third issue concerns our conception of associations. In a nutshell, many contributors are skeptical about the plausibility of using the powers of the state to alter the associative environment in ways that benefit democratic governance. One particular concern focuses on the functional capacity, or social basis, of the partially 'artificial' associations we recommend. To play a constructive role in an egalitarian-democratic order, many commentators assert, associations must be rooted in common pre-political identities which our 'artificial' associations by definition lack. We address this concern in 'Why Associative Democracy?' Filling a gap in the original presentation, we argue to the contrary that a world with less organically conceived associations and deliberative arenas might have real advantages, both moral and functional, over a world in which groups have more particularistic identities.

Egalitarianism and Democracy

The egalitarian-democratic political project aims at 'a reconciliation of liberty with equality'.[1] Committed to a framework of universal civil and political liberties, it seeks to advance an ideal of *substantive political equality*, ensuring that citizens' political influence is not determined by their economic position, a requirement of *real equality of opportunity*, condemning inequalities in advantage tracing to differences in social background,[2] and a conception of the general welfare giving *priority to the least well-off*.[3]

Until the second half of the twentieth century, such a reconciliation was only a theoretical possibility.[4] But the rise and postwar consolidation of social democracy and its central creation, the modern welfare state, gave the egalitarian-democratic project practical force. Social democracy was always criticized by some egalitarians for accommodating capitalism and by others for excessive statism. Still, it achieved considerable success both in protecting basic liberties and severing the fate of equal citizens from their unequal advantages in the labor market.

Today, however, the characteristic ideology and political practice of social democracy, including the welfare state as a form of social administration and guarantor of equality,[5] are in considerable disarray.[6] With the decline of the social democratic model – at once a *particular* model of egalitarian-democratic governance and the only one to have enjoyed much success – genuine doubts have re-emerged about the prospects for a happy marriage of liberty and equality.

We assume that current difficulties in egalitarian-democratic practice owe less to changes in human nature or aspiration than to what may be broadly classed as 'organizational' problems – specifically, to a mismatch between the characteristic organizing and governance practices of social democracy and changed material conditions. Our question is how this mismatch might be remedied. Given changed circumstances, what institutional model might again advance egalitarian-democratic ideals?

The gist of our view is that advancing egalitarian-democratic ideals requires a social base of support for those ideals; that realizing such a social base requires deliberate attention to its creation; that the appropriate form of attention includes the devolution of certain characteristically state responsibilities to associative arenas of civil society; that such devolution has been made plausible by the same forces that account for the evident disarray in traditional social democratic politics; and that associations with devolved responsibility might help to support democratic political consensus and increase social learning capacities – both essential to stable egalitarian order, and currently in short supply.

As its emphasis on devolution might suggest, associative democracy aims to carry social democracy's egalitarian ideals forward through a more *radical democratization* of traditional egalitarian practice. In so doing, it seeks a *reconciliation* of the radical democratic and egalitarian traditions while moving beyond them both. We offer a word at the outset on the terms of that reconciliation.

The central ideal of radical democracy is to root the exercise of public power in practices of free discussion among equal citizens, with the understanding that the relevant conditions of discussion cannot be confined to formal political arenas.[7] Proceeding from this concern for participation and discussion, radical democrats have expressed persistent disquiet with the *statism* of the egalitarian tradition and of social democracy in particular. They criticize statist versions of egalitarianism for undervaluing the benefits of decentralized authority for citizen education and self-government; for exaggerating common-alities of citizens at the expense of their heterogeneity, and thus promoting an assimilationist conception of social unity; and for advancing a distributive conception of politics that inevitably promotes the administration of passive, consumption-oriented clients rather than self-rule by active citizens.

Telling as these criticisms may be, the *constructive* content of a radical-democratic institutional model has long been obscure.[8] According to some critics of radical democracy, this obscurity should

come as no surprise, as it reflects the political irrelevance in a mass democracy of the radical democratic ideal of discussion among equal citizens.[9] The alleged irrelevance has two principal sources. First, mass democracy's characteristic pluralism implies that political discussion cannot assume a unitary community with a shared conception of the good; the absence of such a community raises doubts about the ideal of discussion aimed at consensus. Second, in large societies with complex divisions of social labor, democratic discussion cannot simply replace such conventional mechanisms of social coordination as markets, administrative hierarchies and group bargaining; this throws into question the practical interest of discussion as an organizing principle.[10]

Our proposed reunion of radical democratic and egalitarian traditions seeks to accommodate their mutual criticisms. We think that the radical democrat has identified important limits of statist egalitarianism, and that these limits are now evident in social democratic difficulties. At the same time, in the design of a constructive institutional model, we premiss pluralism and concomitant limits on consensus;[11] we also assume the need for markets, hierarchies and bargaining, and accept the bar their existence imposes on over-ambitious versions of the radical democratic project.

On these terms, how far might reconciliation proceed? We do not know, and the answer makes a difference to how associative democracy is understood. Conceived minimally, associative democracy offers a *strategy* to relieve some of the difficulties of social democracy by harnessing associative energies more deliberately – it provides a tool that can, for example, aid in the performance of regulatory tasks lying beyond the competence of the state. At the (untested) maximum, it suggests a new form of *political-constitutional order*. Characterized simultaneously by greater reliance on non-state institutions to define and resolve social problems, the application of more deliberate standards of universalism on those institutions and more deliberate efforts to construct requisite social solidarities, this order would comprise a rival to the traditional social democratic welfare state.

Social Democracy and its Discontents

How did social democracy work in its heyday, and why has that day passed?

First and last a working-class political project, social democracy offered 'soft' redistribution[12] toward workers and limited power-

sharing, in both the firm and the state, between workers and capitalists. Social democratic economic policy relied on Keynesian alchemy to transform the particular interests of workers to general social interests. Wage increases or state-led redistribution toward labor increased effective demand, which was captured by domestic firms supplying employment; stabilization of markets encouraged investment, which increased productivity, which lowered the real costs of consumption goods, which, along with wage increases, spurred further consumption and rising living standards for all. In everyday politics and governance, strong industrial union movements made deals with 'monopoly' capital directly – in centralized systems of wage-bargaining – or through the state – classically, exchanging wage moderation for commitments to increased social welfare spending and guarantees of full employment.[13] By relieving some of the competition among capitalists, these deals facilitated cooperation between the classes in meeting the more stringent standards on capitalist performance they also imposed.

What undid social democracy most basically was the collapse of a series of key background conditions that supported the advances just described. Most prominently these included:[14]

1. A *nation-state* capable of directive control of the economic environment within its territory. This control assumed a national economy sufficiently insulated from foreign competitors that the benefits of demand-stimulus could be reliably captured within its borders, and a monetary policy apparatus sufficiently insulated from world-wide financial flows to permit unilateral correctives to recession. Of particular relevance to social cohesion, the sheer competence of the state in managing the macroeconomy – Keynes's central discovery – provided compelling material reasons for participation in national political discourse.

2. The organization of capital into a system of *mass production*[15] and an economy dominated by large, lead, stable firms in different key industry clusters. Such firms provided ready targets for worker organization and levers in extending the benefits of organization throughout the economy they dominated. In the mass production setting, firm stability – underwritten by demand stabilization policies – also meant career stability for the workers within them. Stability of mass producers and careers in turn facilitated the evolution of the 'industrial' model of union organization, centered on centralized bargaining and joint administration of the internal labor market.

3. The overwhelming dominance of *class concerns* in the politics

of equality. The dominance owed to the existence of a more or less determinate working class, the strength and superiority of whose organization dwarfed other secular, non-business organizations and concerns. Aided by pre-existing 'organic' solidarities and all manner of social restrictions, the distinctiveness and integrity of this class was assured by the leveling tendencies of mass production. These both limited the force of traditional craft divisions and, on the assembly line, forcefully clarified the distinctive interests of labor and capital.

These premises, both institutional and social, can no longer be taken with confidence. Instead, current circumstances include:

1. More sharply delineated *limits on and of the state*. Increased internationalization of product and capital markets has qualified the old Keynesian alchemy. Simple unilateral reflations can no longer proceed in confidence that increased demand will be met by domestic firms. The same factors have enlarged domestic capital's possibilities of exit from progressive national tax regimes. In addition to new limits on the state, moreover, changes in the sorts of problem the state is asked to address or in the background conditions under which it does so have highlighted longstanding incapacities of state institutions.[16]

In economic policy, for example, concern has in some measure shifted from macroeconomic demand stabilization to the intricacies of moving individual firms or industries toward higher and more socially satisfying levels of performance. This has underscored the limits of 'strong thumbs' and the need for local cooperation and 'nimble fingers' of the sort the state commonly cannot provide or secure. In social policy, the hollowing out of communities and other sources of informal self-regulation, along with irreversible increases in female labor market participation, have encouraged the state to take on functions previously discharged by families or communities with sensibilities and local knowledge unavailable to it. The increase in generic regulation of capital – in, for example, the areas of environmental regulation or occupational and safety and health – has underscored the difficulty of applying general standards to dispersed, heterogeneous sites, or imposing a particular solution prior to negotiation among affected actors. And the concatenation of these problems with a widening range of citizen demands[17] has underscored the degree to which successful governance strategies require coordination and negotiation across traditional policy domains or organized interests, and then often in areas so murky or turbulent as to defy any single correct or stable solution. From this, all manner of problems with legitimation and administration follow.[18]

The unsurprising result of these changing problems and background conditions is that the state is commonly, and in considerable measure properly, perceived as incompetent. It lacks the monitoring and enforcement capacity to make rules stick; it is inefficient in its required compliance strategies; it is incapable on its own of solving any truly complicated social problem.[19]

2. The collapse of traditional mass production, and with that collapse, *increased social heterogeneity*. Competition among firms has vastly increased and in response the organization of production has changed. Whatever the final result of the ongoing battle among different strategies of response – from simple sweating of labor to lean production to the many variants of high-skill strategies geared to product distinctiveness – virtually all appear to disrupt the commonalities of experience that provided the foundation of traditional industrial unionism. There is greater firm decentralization and, within more decentralized units as well as across them, greater variation in the terms and conditions of work, the structures of career paths and rewards, the marketability of heterogeneous skills. Even before it is enlarged by variations across worksites, moreover, workforce heterogeneity is underscored by increased mobility of workers across firms, the casualization of much employment and the increased distance of worksites from homes.

In addition to immensely complicating the development of general standards on economic performance and wage and benefit equality, increased workforce heterogeneity disrupts the possible agent of such equalization. It goes without saying that any political project needs a social base which supports that project against opposition. Given possibilities of defection from general social norms – possibilities enlarged by the existence of markets – egalitarian-democratic alternatives must be especially attentive to the need for social integration and solidarity. Again, social democracy found that base in a working class partly 'made' under conditions of mass production.[20] But the world of relatively stable employment for workers performing relatively common tasks in relatively stable firms has widely disappeared, 'unmaking' the working class as a mass agent. Moreover, because the articulation of work and family within the welfare state meant that conceptions of class were gendered, the increases of women's labor market participation have had similar effects. In brief, workforce heterogeneity now approximates the heterogeneity of the broader society, qualifying the working class as a determinate agent of that society's transformation.[21]

3. Increased *political heterogeneity* within the broader class of

citizens who might support egalitarian ideals. In addition to social solidarity, any political project needs agreement among its agents on the terms of that project, and that agreement must be sufficiently encompassing to provide the fuel for mass action. Social democracy dealt with the problem essentially by declaring class interests to be – in a way braved rhetorically since Marx but demonstrated materially only after Keynes – universal. Assuming the primacy of the class cleavage, it solved a problem for capitalism – and so for everyone – by redistributing to workers.

Today, however, not just this particular universal class, but the idea of universalism itself, is in disrepair. As an organizational matter, no single set of institutions – save perhaps, business firms – is sufficiently powerful to *impose* its interest as the general interest. And as a matter of ideology, none but the sectarian are prepared to elevate any particular interest – whether class or gender or race or the environment or sexual toleration – to that exalted status. Even where, as is less and less the case, political party organization remains a site of broader convergence, that convergence suffers from its distance from the most vital organizations and practices within this divided field. The convergence is less passionate than that found in old social democratic parties fueled by an insurgent labor movement. Nor is there any obvious basis in everyday life and culture for some other-regarding universalism of new citizen subjects. If anything, indeed, the relentless commodification and privatization of civic culture, combined with a general failure to refashion eighteenth-century political rights in light of late twentieth-century conditions, makes the informed, active, other-regarding citizen increasingly fugitive.

With its means of administration widely regarded as incompetent or worse, its social base decomposing and its political cohesion come unstuck, little wonder that social democracy has fallen on hard times. For those committed to egalitarian-democratic ideals, these troubles underscore the need to look for an alternative institutional model. But such a model cannot simply derive new institutions and policies from attractive principles of justice. It must also take the sources of disruption of social democracy seriously. And that means presenting an institutional model that successfully addresses or avoids these problems in constructing a social base for that alternative.

What is to be Done?

The problems of social democracy have generated considerable disarray among people sympathetic to its egalitarian aims. Here we

sketch three lines of response, distinguishing them by the implications they draw from the declining social base of social democracy.

Lowered Expectations

One characteristic response to social democratic difficulties is to lower expectations -- to take the decline of social democracy as signalling the impossibility of realizing the procedural and substantive political values that define the egalitarian-democratic project.

A popular version of this response begins by noting the new heterogeneity of politically relevant identities – the dominance of an 'identity politics' – and concluding that the more encompassing solidarities required to advance any egalitarian project have irreparably collapsed. In a social world densely populated by hyphenated, particularistic identities, citizens will not be prepared to 'regard the distribution of natural talents as a common asset and to share in the benefits of this distribution whatever it turns out to be' or to 'share one another's fate'.[22] Without the relevant solidarities, the fact that some people have 'drawn blanks rather than prizes in the lottery of life'[23] may be mourned but it cannot be remedied. The best political hope is a commitment to fair procedures for collective decision-making among unequals.

Considered on its own terms, such a chastened aspiration to a merely procedural justice risks incoherence. It assumes, implausibly, the robustness of fair procedures independent of substantive agreement. Associated with that, it draws an overly sharp distinction between the solidarities required to sustain fair procedures, which it assumes to be relatively thin, and the attachments required to sustain substantive fairness, which it supposes to be relatively thick.[24] Moreover, it presumes an implausible fixity of current, fissiparous political identities.

Intellectual coherence aside, among those committed to egalitarian-democratic ideals the position should only be considered in default. Premissed on the unavailability of something better, lowered expectations should only be accepted after that premise is truly tested.

Redefined Property Rights

Social democracy sought to meliorate the consequences of the exercise of capitalist property rights through popular organization and political power. Leaving the basic assignment of those rights undisturbed, it countered them with unions, political parties and the

welfare state. With problems having emerged for these organizational forms, one egalitarian strategy is to alter that basic property rights assignment – to redistribute initial property rights – and to construct new sorts of markets for their exercise. In essence, the strategy is to accommodate the decline in social democracy's organizational basis by focusing attention on reordering economic background conditions.

John Roemer's recent market socialist scheme is an example of such a strategy.[25] Premising the importance of markets as sources of dynamic efficiency, Roemer's proposal would promote greater equality by distributing the profits of firms to citizens – giving citizens shares that can be traded on a stock market, that cannot be cashed in and that revert to the state on the holder's death. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis have suggested a similar 'asset-based redistribution' approach.[26] They propose to remove productivity-suppressing wealth inequalities while enabling average citizens to vote with their feet (vouchers, etc.) in the accountability of public institutions, and to protect citizens from the vicissitudes of the market by constitutionalizing certain citizen property rights – for example, to benefits in the areas of health, education, training and disability insurance.

Should egalitarian democrats endorse such strategies? Certainly, any fairer distribution of property rights is to be welcomed. And certainly, properly designed markets can provide powerful accountability mechanisms on runaway or incompetent government. On these terms, then, at this level of abstraction, the answer is 'absolutely'.

But any endorsement should stop short of agreement that the organizational issue can be fully ignored or treated as a sociological supplement to an already well-defined and robust new property rights regime. To be sure, the property rights variant of egalitarianism makes an important point: realist assumptions of market governance under capitalism and of pluralism and dissensus within politics, along with attention to the decline in 'organic' solidarities of all kinds, recommend economizing on the scarce motives of trust and solidarity. Still, *some* such motives are necessary. And that means that some strategy for achieving them – if need be, through deliberate encouragement and construction – must also be at the core of any new egalitarian model.

Trust and solidarity are important because no social design is strategy-proof. No matter how careful its initial setup[27] or ingenious its incentives to equality-enhancing behavior, those motivated only by self-interest or narrow group concerns will find a way to spoil it. And once they do, even those earlier prepared to be bound by minimal solidaristic norms will depart from them; to be solidaristic is not, after

all, to be a dupe. The stability of any egalitarian scheme depends, then, on a social basis of support more robust than the qualified support among the self-interested, who might be offered a generally attractive property rights regime. To maintain equality, it needs an egalitarian political culture and a 'civic consciousness' in its participants congruent with egalitarian ends.[28]

Such consciousness cannot, moreover, depend exclusively for its institutional support on the fact that individuals enjoy the status of equal citizenship. Assuming democratic conditions and rights of association, organized groups will emerge which provide potentially competing bases of political identity, with dispersed 'veto powers' to block alternatives that do not conform to their particular ends. So, a political culture sympathetic to equality requires support in those groups themselves. Such organizations must be sufficiently rooted in the particularity of individual experience to be regarded by members as compelling expressions of their identity and instruments of their interests. At the same time, they need to be congruent with a general interest in equality – else the constitutionally equalizing property regime falls prey to the same group rent-seeking and particularism that now plagues all pluralist democracies.

In short, there is no way round the problem of ensuring a social base for egalitarian governance. If existing institutions do not provide it, new ones must be built. And the need to build them must inform the overall conception of an egalitarian political project.

Reconstruction

Without gainsaying the importance of procedural fairness or, certainly, a fairer or smarter distribution of initial property rights, strategies of reconstruction aim more directly at the problem of the missing social base.

Most such strategies are pursued within an explicitly social democratic frame – to 'reinvent' social democratic parties as appealing to a collection of particular interests beyond those of labor, or 'reinvent' labor unions as something more than collective bargaining institutions (or at least as bargaining institutions concerned with more than wages and working conditions). They propose, however, no fundamental alteration of the traditional social democratic model now in difficulty. If our diagnosis of social democracy's problems is right, those problems lie deeper than such conventional strategies of reconstruction suggest. Whatever their immediate importance, then, for our purposes such conventional strategies are not very interesting.

We come, then, to our own associative strategy. We begin with a now familiar premise: any working egalitarian-democratic order requires an organized social base. We assume that what was true of the social democratic model is true of any egalitarian model operating under mass democratic conditions with rights of association: secondary associations are needed to represent otherwise under-represented interests (e.g. trade unions supporting redistributive policies) and to add to state competence in administration (e.g. trade unions and employer associations negotiating standards on training). We observe the obvious: that the right kinds of association do not naturally arise in either the representative or more functional spheres. Pathologies of inequality and particularism abound in representation, while the range of areas where associative sorts of governance or assistance is imaginable in theory but not available in practice is vast – and, we believe, expanding.

Putting the need for a favorable associative environment together with the fact that such an environment is not naturally provided, we propose a deliberate use of public powers to promote the organizational bases needed for egalitarian regimes – to encourage the development of the right kinds of secondary association. Where manifest inequalities in political representation exist, we recommend promoting the organized representation of presently excluded interests. Where group particularism undermines democratic deliberation or popular sovereignty, we recommend efforts to encourage the organized to be more other-regarding in their actions. Where associations have greater competence than public authorities for achieving democratic ends, or where their participation could more effectively promote political values, we recommend encouraging a more direct and formal governance role for groups.

We concentrate here on this last recommendation – the more deliberate use of associations in regulation – both because of its relative concreteness and because it, perhaps more clearly than the other recommendations, suggests both the minimum and maximum possibilities of associative democracy: its appeal as a strategy and as an alternative order.[29]

In our earlier discussion of the limits of the state, we sketched the background problem of state regulation in general terms.[30] For reasons ranging from a wider array of social concerns to the decline of traditionally 'self-regulating' institutions, the state is called on to declare and enforce standards of performance in a vast range of areas. In some areas, such declaration and enforcement is fairly straightforward. Broad purposes are clear or readily discernible through legislative

debate; centralized mechanisms of monitoring and enforcement – supplemented by civil liability schemes or field inspectorates – suffice to generate compliance; ongoing negotiation of terms is unnecessary or even unwelcome.

But in four broad classes of cases – each densely populated with issues of social concern on which state action is sought – things are not so straightforward:

1. Where government has the competence to set specific regulatory terms, but the objects of regulation are sufficiently numerous, dispersed or diverse to preclude serious government *monitoring* of compliance. Many workplace regulations – on appropriate wages and hours, compensation and especially the appropriate organization of work, pertaining for example to occupational health and safety – provide instances of this monitoring problem.

2. Where government has the competence to set general standards of performance, but the objects of regulation are sufficiently diverse or unstable to preclude government specification of the most appropriate *means* of achieving them at particular regulated sites. Much environmental regulation is of this kind. Although the state is competent to declare general air quality standards and end-of-pipe abatement goals or standards of toxic source reduction, divergent and changing technologies or production patterns constantly shift the efficient strategies for achieving these goals; and what is most efficient or appropriate is known only by those with local knowledge of heterogeneous circumstances.

3. Where government may (or may not) be able to enforce standards once set, but cannot set appropriate *ends* itself.[31] Often, an appropriate standard can only be determined by those with local knowledge not readily available to government, or can only be specified as the outcome or in the context of prolonged cooperation among non-government actors. Industry standards on product or process uniformity and performance are often of this kind. So too are education and especially training standards. The appropriate norm shifts constantly; the content of the norm derives from cooperation in the process of its establishment.[32]

4. Where problems are substantially the product of multiple causes and connected with other problems, crossing conventional policy domains and processes. In such cases, the appropriate strategy requires *coordination* across those domains as well as cooperation from private actors within them. Urban poverty, local economic development and effective social service delivery are among the familiar problems that

occupy this class. None can be solved without cooperation across quite different institutions and groups – lending institutions, healthcare providers, technology diffusers, education and training establishments, housing authorities, community development corporations, neighborhood associations – operating wholly or substantially outside the state itself. These and other 'stakeholders' in the problem and its proposed solution, however, typically have distinct if not competing agendas, and different identities and interests.

When these sorts of problems are encountered – and as described they are more or less coextensive with modern regulation – our associative approach recommends explicit harnessing of the distinctive capacity of associations to gather local information, monitor compliance and promote cooperation among private actors by reducing its costs and building the trust on which it typically depends. In those areas where the problems are more or less *functionally specific*[33] – where ends are set but monitoring capacities need to be enhanced, or means or ends are uncertain but the area of concern is narrowly cabined – European social democracy is rife with examples of just such associative governance. As a general matter, they are most developed in the areas of workplace regulation and training, and rely on institutions controlled by the traditional 'social partners' of labor and capital. The use of plant committees to enforce occupational safety and health regulations, for example, or groupings of trade unions and employers to facilitate technology diffusion, or employer and union associations to set standards on training, are all familiar.

We have suggested that the lessons of practice in these areas be more explicitly generalized to include non-traditional stakeholders, and that where necessary appropriate supports for that generalization be deliberately constructed. Moreover, as the scope of associative efforts moves beyond functionally specific problems to issues that are decidedly more sprawling and open-ended – as in the urban poverty or regional economic development examples – the associative strategy recommends the construction of new arenas for public deliberation that lie outside conventional political arenas,[34] and whose ambit is not exhausted by any particular interest solidarity at all.

Notice, however, that both the inclusion of non-traditional stakeholders and the decline of functional specificity suggest a new possibility: that the bases of social solidarity may partially shift from 'found' commonalities rooted *outside* the process of defining and addressing common concerns – and relating to those concerns only incidentally or in ways not transparent to those doing the relating – to commonalities that are, and are understood to be, constructed *through*

that process. It is one thing for a well-funded union to be asked to participate in the design of training standards of obvious concern to it as well as the broader society. It is quite another for an underfunded community environmental organization to gain significant resources (and thus greater organizational life) on condition of its assistance in the design of an environmental 'early warning' system, and for those recruited to that project to be recruited essentially on the basis of public service, or for a neighborhood association and economic development corporation in a poor community to receive assistance conditional on their jointly organizing a training program for parents and a childcare program for trainees as part of a broader job-training effort.

Such solidarities will, of course, differ from those rooted in common culture and life circumstance. They will be the bonds of people with common concerns – say, a concern to address persistent urban poverty – treating one another as equal partners in the resolution of those shared concerns.[35] But the bonds arising from participation in such arenas, in the solution of large and commonly recognized problems, need not be trivial or weak; and they could be strengthened by the repeated experience of cooperation itself. There is, after all, no limit to the number of arenas that might thus be constructed, then folded on the completion of the task; no restriction on the number of times individuals or groups might have the experience of such joint problem-solving under conditions that are defined only by their intended facilitation of that problem-solving.

The role of deliberative arenas in the associative conception is perhaps the sharpest expression of its radical democratic inspiration. To highlight the importance of such arenas, it may help to conclude this sketch by distinguishing associative democracy from another project of radical democratic inspiration: the project of building economic democracy around worker cooperatives or self-management at the level of individual firms.

Increased workplace democracy would be an important social improvement, and we certainly believe that associational rights within the workplace should be strengthened to that end. But we are much less confident than traditional workplace democracy advocates that the firm provides an appropriate unit of organizational analysis in the construction of a democratic society.

The reason why goes back to the stylized facts of social democratic decline offered above. In a world of high mobility across firms and heterogeneity of interests within them, the individual firm per se is diminished as a locus for the aggregation of interests and formation of

solidarities. While the degree to which the real economy approximates a 'virtual' one – with Moebius-like boundaries between carnivalesque firms and plastic identities of workers within them – is commonly exaggerated, we take it now to be beyond question that an exclusively firm-based system of economic democracy no longer fits the actual economy.[36] In addition to institutions within firms, then, we need mechanisms of economic democracy articulated on a supra-firm basis. Moreover, the fact of political heterogeneity indicates a need for different mechanisms to address different dimensions of concern; for example, wages, education and training, environment, health and safety. We need, in short, more broadly defined deliberative arenas than those suggested by workplace democracy.

If the social solidarity arising from practice within such deliberative arenas were not trivial, it would comprise a sort of *tertium quid*: a form of solidarity operative in civil society, transparently not 'natural' or 'found' or particularistic, not based in direct participation in the national project of citizenship, but definitely founded on participation in deliberative arenas designed with a cosmopolitan intent.

An ample supply of this new kind of solidarity, finally, at least hints at a way through the present morass of social democratic distemper and increasingly barren exchanges between radical, participatory democrats and statist egalitarians. At once more efficient in administration and more directive of secondary association, more encompassing in its ambitions and less indicative on all but the terms of civil deliberation, more attentive to the construction of solidarity but less patient with its found forms, here associative democracy the *strategy* might become associative democracy the different *order*.

Why Associative Democracy?

For some, this associative democratic project may appear fanciful, or worse. Objections to it might be summarized as charges of undesirability, impossibility and futility – respectively, that the associative strategy will give rise to new and dangerous forms of group abuse of organized power; that it cannot get started because patterns of group organization and behavior lie beyond deliberate politics; that it will not work because the associations it fosters lack the very characteristics that make associative solutions attractive.

Because we have addressed the undesirability and impossibility objections at length elsewhere,[37] we give them short shrift here. Suffice it to say that the undesirability objection understates the extent to

which the current group system infirms egalitarian-democratic order, while the impossibility argument exaggerates the fixity of associations, beginning with the assumption that secondary associations are a product of nature, or culture, or some other unalterable substrate of a country's political life.[38]

Concentrating, then, on the futility objection, the issue is this. Assume that the impossibility objection is wrong and that the structure of the secondary associative environment is indeed subject to influence and artifaction. Still, such artifaction may come at the expense of the very features that make secondary associations attractive. These features derive principally from the ability of associations to elicit cooperation and trust among otherwise disconnected subjects. But this ability depends, the objection goes, on the experience of associations as organized expressions of a pre-political identity. As the politics of associations grows increasingly deliberate and intentional, then, associations will lose their distinctive ability and thus add less to more remote forms of governance. The more social solidarities are not simply found but fabricated, the less useful they are in addressing real problems.

Our response to this objection accepts its premise about the change in character of associations that follows from artifaction, but draws more optimistic conclusions about the implications of that change. That is, we agree that the solidarities engendered in our proposed practice would be different from 'natural' solidarities – different, at a minimum, because they would not be experienced as natural and would lack the dense cultural texture associated with things so experienced. But rather than treating these differences as deficiencies, we think they are *desirable*, given the changes in the world that provide our point of departure.

How could this possibly be? How could more cosmopolitan but thinner solidarities be exactly what is needed now? The answer has both moral and functional elements. It concerns both the fit of such new solidarities with the need for democratic consensus and the contribution such new solidarities might make to social learning.

New Solidarities and Morals[39]

To see the case on the moral side, recall the social and political heterogeneity we take to be standing features of the world. Such heterogeneity makes it difficult to achieve consensus on a political conception of justice, including the conception summarized by egalitarian democracy. This is a problem. Consensus on political fundamentals

is desirable for any conception of justice, and is particularly important for an egalitarian conception operating under the realist constraints – capitalism, markets, strategic behavior – we elsewhere accept.

For any conception of justice, consensus increases the likelihood that the order will stably conform to the conception. Moreover, consensus directly promotes a variety of more specific values – social trust and harmony, social peace, simplified decision-making, reduced monitoring and enforcement costs, and (assuming the consensus is reflected in public debate and decisions) reduced citizen alienation from public choices. Furthermore, it helps reconcile the ideal of an association whose members are politically independent and self-governing with the fact that social and political arrangements shape the self-conceptions of members and limit their choices.[40] Consensus also encourages mutual respect among citizens – with political argument offered in the form of considerations that others are willing to accept and state action justified and cabined by the same considerations.

Reaching such consensus under democratic pluralist conditions, however, is difficult. The reason is that a political consensus that reflects values of self-government and mutual respect must be arrived at under free conditions, including the protection of basic expressive and associative liberties. And under such conditions citizens will be drawn to competing comprehensive moral, religious and philosophical outlooks – with some founding their political values on an Aristotelian ideal of human flourishing or a Kantian morality of autonomy or conscientious religious conviction and others endorsing pluralistic moralities which combine relatively autonomous political and personal values. A political consensus suited to such conditions, then, cannot rest on any particular comprehensive outlook.

But a consensus on a *political* conception of justice can perhaps survive such *moral* pluralism. Citizens endorsing conflicting moral, religious and philosophical convictions may still enjoy an 'overlapping consensus' on a political conception that includes principles of justice, political values such as fairness and toleration, and a conception of the person identifying relevant features of citizens from a political point of view.[41] Citizens might endorse the same political *theorems*, as it were, even as they derived those theorems from different moral, religious and philosophical *axioms*. What is essential is that the value of fair cooperation among equals finds support within each of their respective sets of axioms (as it does within the comprehensive views offered in illustration above).

Political consensus is possible, then, under conditions of pluralism. But possibility is one thing and real practicality is another. Practicality

depends, at a minimum, on the availability of institutional mechanisms that might promote an overlapping consensus. Are there any such mechanisms?

One ready answer is that consensus is advanced by political discussion within a stable democratic process. Assuming consensus on constitutional democracy, the fact that individuals and parties need to win support for their views and projects puts pressure on their views to accommodate the deeper idea of citizens as equal persons, both reconfirming the constitutional consensus and at the same time deepening and extending it.[42]

Consider, for example, the evolution of the political rhetoric and project of socialist parties in this century.[43] They begin the century with a class project, presenting themselves as agents of the industrial working class; they expect the maturation of capitalism to turn the working class into a majority of the population; and they understand that they can only sustain their claim to serve as an agent of the working class if they participate in democratic politics, winning near-term gains by winning elections. But the identification of the industrial working class with the majority is increasingly baffled by its numerical minority status in the population. Hence their electoral dilemma. To serve that class through elections they need to win elections, but winning elections means extending their political appeal beyond the working class itself. The result is that socialist parties – at least those that preserve electoral commitments – universalize their appeal and address themselves to all citizens, as equals. As Przeworski observes:

Differentiation of the class appeal ... reinstates a classless vision of politics. When social democratic parties become parties of 'the entire nation,' they reinforce the vision of politics as a process of defining the collective welfare of 'all members of the society.' Politics once again is defined on the dimension individual-nation, not in terms of class.[44]

But while political argument under democratic conditions can deepen consensus by encouraging commitments to the idea of citizens as equals, formal political arenas are unlikely to foster widespread commitment to the value of fair cooperation among equals if that commitment is too sharply at odds with convictions formed outside the public political arena. Consider a state whose citizens are divided into two religious groups with strong religious identities, whose members live entirely separate lives, never associating with members of the other group. In such a world there are no social pressures for religious convictions themselves to accommodate the idea of citizens

as moral equals. Apart from the epiphanies of national politics there is no experience that supports that idea – no regular practices of discussion in which each group is called upon to find terms that the others can accept.

And so we ask: are there practices *outside* the formal political arena that are educative in the ways of overlapping consensus – schools of overlapping consensus that encourage non-particularistic forms of solidarity? We would argue that the experience of cooperation within specifically artifactual arenas of deliberation appears to provide just such encouragement.

Such arenas are 'schools of democracy' in a special way. Apart from generating enlarged sensibilities and encouraging a sense of competence and self-confidence, they foster solidarities congruent with the mutual respect among citizens that lies at the heart of overlapping consensus. This is especially so when coordination is not functionally specific. Deliberative arenas established for such coordination bring together people with very different identities. Successful cooperation within them should encourage willingness to treat others with respect as equals, precisely because discussion in these arenas requires fashioning arguments acceptable to those others. In this respect a social world in which solidarities are formed in deliberative arenas is distinct from a social world in which arenas (other than the state itself) have more particularistic cast, perhaps encouraging comprehensive views to which values of fair cooperation among equals are foreign. Organic solidarities stand in a more tenuous relationship to the equal citizenship than do artifactual solidarities built on a background of common purposes and discussion.

To emphasize, associations and deliberative arenas are not and are not intended to be alternative loci of solidarity as classically understood. Nor is the intent to supplant existing comprehensive moral or religious views with new ones. The idea is that the bonds they foster are more like the solidarities of citizenship. They develop shared ground among people with different identities and views, thus encouraging the elaboration of comprehensive views in ways that are congruent with values of fair cooperation among equals. The effort might be thought of as one of 'decolonizing the life world' – of establishing arenas of discussion that lie outside the formal political system and are not mediated by money and power. What we claim is that just such an effort is what is needed today to establish an overlapping consensus on an egalitarian-democratic conception of justice.

New Solidarities and Functions

What we have just argued as a moral matter may also be argued functionally, with the virtues of looser solidarities now translated into practical benefits in matters of governance.[45]

For functionally specific sorts of problems, the case for the benefits of integrating secondary association in regulative governance is made easily enough. Often, to recur to our ideal-typical classes of regulatory problems, the *monitoring* of compliance with clear norms across numerous or dispersed sites overtaxes the capacities of state inspectorates; and often, within well-defined problem areas, specific *means* to the achievement of compliance with agreed standards are best left to the discretion of local actors. In such circumstances, the recruitment or encouragement of extra-state popular capacities in the achievement of regulatory goals is often recommended, and secondary associations are a natural target of recruitment. Always, of course, there are problems in identifying the appropriate groups in civil society and in guaranteeing against their domination in local sites or their abuse of the public powers effectively devolved to them. But none of these problems seems intractable. If workers in firms are assigned monitoring and enforcement powers in occupational safety and health, they clearly need training in the exercise of those powers and to be linked back into the wider system of state enforcement. If neighborhood groups are permitted to negotiate local compliance strategies with area polluters, the deals they arrive at must themselves be reviewed in the light of broad statutory purposes. Throughout, however, the specificity and clarity of those purposes provides a legitimating framework for devolution.

As functional specificity declines, however, things become more interesting. We begin to approach such areas when the precise *ends* of policy are unclear, even if there is broad background agreement on the purposes against which those ends are measured.

Consider again the example of training. The precise breadth and depth of skill standards in what is *already understood* as an occupationally-based human capital system is usefully subject to local negotiation. Such negotiation can also be mandated and encouraged by the state with some confidence that the range of outcomes is more or less cabined and the relevant players in the discussion are more or less known and not subject to challenge. But changes in firm production strategies owing to changes in the external terms of competition, and spillovers from human capital decisions to other areas of social concern (e.g. gender equity) may begin to disrupt such confidence, throwing the routines of policy formation into question.

Generally stated, as the range of social concerns implicated in

any given problem area shifts or expands, or as the interdependence of solution strategies in different areas becomes more obvious or fluid, we can expect administrative or legitimation difficulties. In such cases, social problems typically do not correspond to the competences of *any* particular state agency or any particular found group or interest. In consequence, addressing such problems requires coordination within the state across its formal decision-making or administrative machinery in different policy domains, and agreement on that coordination with the relevant – and mutually distant – private actors affected by each. To solve such problems, routinely what is needed within the state, but *especially* among scattered private actors, is some institutionalized learning capacity – a capacity specifically to identify new problems and experiment with solutions that disrespect existing organizational boundaries and competences.

But this learning capacity will not be forthcoming in the absence of discussion and negotiation across such bounded interests and organizations. And that discussion and negotiation, for familiar reasons, is unlikely to happen at all, let alone routinely, without encouragement. What is needed is the deliberate construction of arenas for such deliberation, and deliberate inducements to enter them.

That the state could engage in such construction and inducement we take to be just short of uncontroversial. Typically in any given problem area, the range of affected interests is known to the state, even if it is not organized. And certainly, the promise of a solution to the relevant problem itself provides inducement to discussion. So too would be signals from the state that its policies and future distribution of sanctions and supports would be shaped by that discussion – for example, through offers of state support to selected projects generated out of arenas in which stakeholders address common concerns. Indeed, the demarcation of such deliberative arenas that bring together organizations concerned to address commonly recognized social problems is *easier* for the state than direct efforts to revive solidarity. Easier, that is, than imposing its view of civic vitality on a neighborhood, or attempting to specify the new terms of worker culture, or founding a new religion, or in some other improbable way seeking literally to construct the sorts of deeper and more particularistic solidarities that have been eroded.

The only relevant questions about such an exercise concern purpose and effect. Are problems of this kind widespread enough to warrant deliberate attention? And would the construction of new deliberative arenas not based on strong prior solidarities – initially, not based on anything stronger than a common commitment to addressing an issue

of serious social concern – plausibly generate the desired learning capacities?

Our short answer to the first question is yes – just such problems now occupy a growing, dominant share of commonly recognized problems. That they do explains many of the governance problems of the modern administrative state. The legitimacy and effectiveness that under classical liberal legal regimes was secured by enforcing abstract rules on the terms of individual contracting, and in more innocent times in the welfare state secured by discrete interventions in cabined problem areas of visible concern only to major actors in those areas,[46] is today denied a state asked to accommodate a wider range of substantive concerns but lacking the capacity to coordinate across them. Holding social organization fixed, problems are thus increasingly defined in ways that point up the impossibility of their solution. On the one hand, most important problems require the cooperation of a wide range of 'stakeholders'. On the other, the lack of vehicles for the coordination of those stakeholders – accepted as a tragic fact or as a residue of senseless modernization or the politics of the 'claimant state' – precludes that cooperation. From this perspective, then, the construction of arenas of deliberation attractive to such stakeholders is of *surpassing* importance.

Should the effort be successful, notice at once its legitimacy effects for the state itself. Instead of being held responsible for its failure to solve problems that all recognize it cannot solve on its own, the state could throw back to civil society a large share of responsibility in devising and implementing their solution. It would say: 'In this area we all know, however rarely we admit it, that the following interests are at stake; if you get in a room together and, under reasonable conditions of deliberation, come up with a plan, the government will help you implement it.' The role of government in such a scheme would in effect be to help staff the deliberation, to set the broad requirements of participant inclusion, to ensure the integrity of the process and, finally, to authorize the strategy conceived. It would devolve power to the civil society, but under universal terms not now embraced by its members. It would retain its own capacities for final authorization, but with the confidence that decisions made would enjoy, from the moment of their enunciation, organized social support. It would, in short, establish a more coherent, and acceptable, definition of its role in social governance.

But is there much reason to expect success? To answer this question, consider first the effects such a process, such a style of governance, might plausibly have on the participants in it.

Assuming fair conditions of discussion and an expectation that the results of deliberation will regulate subsequent action, the participants would tend to be more *other-regarding* in their political practice than they would otherwise be inclined to be. Just as constitutionalized respect for democratic practice affects formal political strategies, so it would affect informal ones. The structure of discussion – the requirement of finding terms that others can agree to – would plausibly drive argument and proposed action in directions that respect and advance more general interests. Moreover, pursuing discussion in the context of enduring differences among participants would incline parties to be more *reflective* in their definition of problems and proposed strategies for solution; it would tend to free discussion from the preconceptions that commonly limit the consideration of options within more narrowly defined, stand-alone groups. Furthermore, *mutual monitoring* in the implementation of agreements would be a natural byproduct of ongoing discussion.[47] And, assuming progress toward solution, we would also see growing confidence in the possibility of future *cooperation*.

If these claims about effects on participants are right, then the functional benefits of deliberative arenas are clear. For example, other-regardingness would encourage a more complete revelation of private information. This information would permit sharper definition of problems and solutions, straightforwardly adding learning capacity. At the same time, reflectiveness would, by suspending conventional preconceptions, lead to a more complete definition and imaginative exploration of problems and solutions. Combined with such informed and inclusive definition, mutual monitoring would heighten the willingness to experiment in solution strategies, itself bringing additional learning effects. Cooperation in those strategies would permit an expansion of the capacities they could draw on, making success more likely.

In all these ways, then, deliberation about common problems with diverse participants might thus reasonably be thought to enhance social learning and problem-solving capacity. The relative 'thinness' of the common identity as participants – both entering the process of deliberation and leaving it – here begins to look like a real benefit. Moreover, as this strategy was pursued more routinely, as the deliberate construction of deliberative arenas across groups became more or less standard operating procedure, and as group experience of it was repeated in partially overlapping arenas and problem clusters, we could expect the character of groups to change. At the margin, they would shift toward practices more geared to multivalence,

open-endedness and learning. The unsubtle mechanism of this expected effect is twofold. On the one hand, the new character becomes more available, settled and familiar through repetition itself. On the other, the fact that this character is sought and rewarded in governance induces its consolidation.

Greater openness and experimentation would, in turn, alter our expectations about what it means to be an effective association or interest group. Some forms of joint firm-community management of environmental problems, or joint labor-feminist-environmental-health-education community-led strategies of economic development in major cities, or multi-firm and multi-union efforts to establish regional wage or product quality norms already suggest that participation changes the internal institutional character and behavior of their participants in the ways we have described.[48] Just as labor-management cooperation in one area commonly has the side-effect of promoting cooperation in others, with cumulative effects eventually affecting global strategies and expectations of their respective members, so too cross-group discussion and exploration of joint strategies alters internal group governance and membership expectation. Under such conditions, the conception of effective representation itself shifts. Instead of meaning that the representing group expresses a particular core demand of its members, it comes to mean that the group acts with a more comprehensive understanding of the good of its members and is more open to addressing that good cooperatively.

Given the changes in the economy and society inventoried above, such internal institutional reform and behavioral change is precisely what is needed in administration and governance *generally*. As the organization of production changes, as new demands are put on human capital systems, as career paths become less certain, as the boundaries of firms become less definite, as the reconciliation of diverse social interests stands ever more clearly as a precondition for the solution of common problems, as found solidarities disappear . . . what could be more helpful in social management than the promotion of solidarities of deliberative learning, mutual respect in navigating change, openness to new institutional forms, provisional commitments to supporting those forms given like commitment by others – all developed under terms of universalism, with a practical intent?

Conclusion

We have been arguing that the sorts of new solidarity engendered by an associative democratic strategy – more provisional and open-ended

than the found solidarities of particularism, with benefits for learning capacity and pragmatic functionality, more cosmopolitan not just in their framing but in their own content – are well suited to a pluralist democracy going through rapid change and needful of new forms of governance both more socially rooted and more adaptive than the state or fierce particularism can provide.

But are these 'new' solidarities redundant? More cosmopolitan groups, with learning capacities, deliberating about public ends . . . isn't that what the state and citizenship are supposed to be about? Perhaps associative governance makes sense when it comes to monitoring occupational safety and health laws or devising a new training regime – functionally-specific duties that have in the past been devolved to groups. But particularly in functionally nonspecific areas, isn't this a very long way around to an active citizenry? Isn't one state enough?

Our response here is roughly that the objection names our project correctly, but draws the wrong conclusion. It is true that we are promoting what once marched under the banner of 'citizenship'. But the fact that it no longer marches indicates the utility of the project. Once more, our starting point is the decline of a base of active and informed citizens supportive of egalitarian democracy. If such a base can be engendered by the more explicit engagement of citizens in social problem-solving, under universalist terms of deliberation, then value is indeed added.

Assuming some such addition, moreover, the broader point is this. Statist forms of egalitarianism have fallen on hard times because they premissed natural solidarities which have now eroded; given that erosion, the state itself appears distant from, hostile to or incapable of the solution to real-world social problems. Radical democracy has long called for the effective liquidation of the state into more socially rooted popular governance; but it must now confront not just the need for the universal ordering that can be provided only by the state but as well the dissolution of the social base on which it presumptively relies. Threading between these failures while drawing lessons from both, we have here suggested a different route for egalitarian governance: use the state in part to construct solidarities; pursue that construction by focusing on recognized problems, with partial agreement at least on their existence and need for solution; and set the deliberative arenas within a democratic state that imposes universalist constraints on the processes and content of their solutions. The result of this is that practices within civil society come to look more like the state, even as they are given more autonomy from the state and assigned a

proportionately greater role in governance. Radical democracy and egalitarianism are joined through a state that stakes deeper social roots in a more cosmopolitan civil society.

Whether such reunion will ever be achieved is one more thing we simply do not know. And how the order it implies – in which the state-society distinction is blunted by the existence of a plurality of deliberative arenas standing in uncertain relations to conventional political ones – might be constitutionally regulated is something on which we do not wish to speculate here. What we are persuaded of, however, is that something like this sort of order is in fact possible and desirable. It can be imagined, there are intimations of it all around us and it may well be necessary to the advance of egalitarian-democratic ideals.

Acknowledgment

Notes

1. As cited in John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1971, p. 204.
2. Ronald Dworkin ('What Is Equality? Part Two: Equality of Resources', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 10 [Fall 1981], pp. 309–11) calls this a conception of 'starting gate equality'.
3. This priority need not be absolute, but it does imply that greater gains among the more advantaged get less weight than improvements among people who are less well-off. For the classic argument for priority, see Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*; also Thomas Nagel, *Equality and Partiality*, New York: Oxford University Press 1991.
4. At least since John Stuart Mill, some political theorists have held out the prospect of reconciling broad rights of suffrage, protections of basic individual liberties and greater distributive equality. See, for example, Keynes's remarks on 'social philosophy' in *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, New York: Harcourt Brace 1964, ch. 24. Not until the 1950s, however, did we have an up-and-running, practical model of such reconciliation.
5. There is no consensus on the degree to which the modern equality-promoting welfare state can survive without explicit organizational commitments to an ideal of egalitarian democracy. Some seem to believe that individual citizen commitments to the welfare state make it robust even in the absence of such organization. With the possible exception of very general insurance programs (in particular, health and old

age insurance), we doubt it. This is only one instance of our general doubts about stand-alone, 'asset-based redistribution' models, discussed above.

6. We take this claim to be uncontroversial. For a review of some of the evidence, see (ignoring his bizarre commentary on the US case) Seymour Martin Lipset, 'No Third Way: A Comparative Perspective on the Left', in Daniel Chirot, ed., *The Crisis of Leninism and the Decline of the Left: The Revolutions of 1989*, Seattle: University of Washington Press 1991, pp. 183–232; or, taking account of recent gains, 'The Left in Western Europe: Rose-tinted Visions', *Economist* 331 (11–17 June 1994), pp. 17–19. The *Economist* discussion sharply underscores our point about the need for a constructive model.

7. The ideal, as Jürgen Habermas ('Further Reflections on the Public Sphere', in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1992, p. 446) puts it, is to establish 'all those conditions of communication under which there can come into being a discursive formation of will and opinion on the part of a public composed of the citizens of a state' (see also Joshua Cohen, 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy', in Alan Hamlin and Phillip Petit, eds, *The Good Polity*, Oxford: Blackwell 1989, pp. 17–34). Habermas's own version of this ideal also emphasizes the restricted scope of discussion: discourses 'generate a communicative power that cannot take the place of administration but can only influence it. This influence is limited to the procurement and withdrawal of legitimation. Communicative power cannot supply a substitute for the systematic inner logic, of public bureaucracies. Rather, it achieves an impact on this logic "in a siege-like manner"' (Habermas, 'Further Reflections on the Public Sphere', p. 452). Our conception of associative democracy is more ambitious, perhaps because we are less struck by the 'systematic inner logic of public bureaucracies'. In any case, we do have 'communicative power' picking up some of the work of the administrative state, not simply imposing a siege upon it.

8. For one effort to remedy that obscurity, see Roberto Unger, *False Necessity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987, pp. 441–539.

9. As Carl Schmitt (*The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1985, p. 6) stated this view, without nuance: 'the development of modern mass democracy has made argumentative public discussion a mere formality'. See also Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. 3, Guenther Roth and Claus Widditch, eds, New York: Bedminster Press 1968, pp. 1381–469, and Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, New York: Harper & Row 1942, chs 21–2.

10. On the contrast between discussion and these other means of coordination, see Jon Elster, 'The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory', in Jon Elster and Aanund Hylland, eds, *Foundations of Social Choice Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986, pp. 103–32; and Cohen, 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy'.

11. Though we do not agree that pluralism excludes consensus. See above, pp. 253–6.

12. The term comes from Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, 'An Economic Strategy for Democracy and Equality', unpublished mimeo, 1993. Redistribution was 'soft' in the sense that it proceeded in a context providing increased living standards for all, even if the disproportionate share of that increase was captured by the less well-off.

13. The expansion of the welfare state – both in expenditures and formal guarantees – was, of course, intimately tied to the maintenance of effectively full employment. The latter provided the tax base for expenditures, while reducing the rate at which safety-net protections were invoked. The social democratic welfare state was always a high-employment welfare state.

14. While the story has been told many times, the next three paragraphs draw from Joel Rogers and Wolfgang Streeck, 'Productive Solidarities: Economic Strategy and Left Politics', in David Miliband, ed., *Reinventing the Left*, London: Polity Press 1994, pp. 128–45.

15. We recognize that not all production was 'mass' in the relevant sense – that craft was not obliterated – and that there was considerable variation in the forms of mass production, but still find this generalization useful.

16. To be more precise, these incapacities are not just 'longstanding', but more or less definitive of modern state governance.

17. See the discussion of political heterogeneity above, pp. 243–4.

18. For details, see above, pp. 257–9.

19. Understandable, then, the declaration of the Partito Democratico della Sinistra, in *L'Italia verso il 2000: Analisi e proposte per un programma di legislatura*, Rome: Editori Riuniti 1992, p. 136: 'We have abandoned every preconceived sympathy for the public sector . . . because it is not justifiable in light of the principles which our party supports: the satisfaction of needs, and therefore efficiency in the supply of goods and services, equality, solidarity, and democracy.' Cited in Bowles and Gintis, 'An Economic Strategy for Democracy and Equality'.

20. On the evolution of social democracy as a working-class project, see Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985, pp. 7–46.

21. Of course, working-class solidarity also drew from sources outside the firm – from working-class neighborhoods, for example, or shared cultures outside work. But the news gets no better here. Neighborhood life today, which is both more planned (by a distant state) and anarchic (made so by a faceless capital) than in the past, is less visibly authored by residents. Culture is deeply commodified and privatized (shopping and watching TV consume most leisure time, usually pursued alone). The decline in such community life threatens even the most limited of egalitarian practices by making the organization of people, on whom any such practice depends, more costly. But a more ambitious egalitarianism, rooted in more encompassing understandings of self than those defined by narrow communities, is also threatened with their disruption. Commodification and the extension of administrative power have not only eroded the agency of particular communities. In doing so they have undermined the socialization practices that, while particular, sustained citizens in the exercise of a more universal and other-regarding public reason. As Habermas ('Further Reflections on the Public Sphere', p. 453) observes: 'A public sphere that functions politically requires more than the institutional guarantees of the constitutional state; it also needs the supportive spirit of cultural traditions and patterns of socialization, of the political culture, of a populace accustomed to freedom.'

22. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 101, 102.

23. Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1962, p. 163.

24. See Joshua Cohen, 'Pluralism and Proceduralism', *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 69, 3 (1994), pp. 589–618 for an attack on the importance of this distinction in political argument.

25. John Roemer, *A Future for Socialism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1994.

26. Bowles and Gintis, 'An Economic Strategy for Democracy and Equality'.

27. And under realistic conditions, just how careful could it possibly be?

28. We would say the same of suggestions – for example, that made by Philippe C. Schmitter, in 'Corporative Democracy: Oxymoronic? Just Plain Moronic? Or a Promising Way out of the Present Impasse', unpublished mimeo, Stanford University 1988, and this volume, Chapter 7 – that aim directly at opening the market on representative institutions themselves, in part by subsidizing citizen support of them. While we are all for such opening and subsidy (in campaign finance, consumer affairs, worker organizing, environmental concerns, etc.) we do not see them as a panacea for current imperfections in pluralist representation. Pathologies of particularism will abound even if those of inequality are partly remedied; and remedies on the inequality front will need to be continually revisited for correction, which will not be successful unless it can draw on social support for equality itself. Nor does the effort do much (or, in fairness,

claim to do much) to solve the problems of popular regulatory capacity – as against representative equality – that also concern us.

29. As the text suggests, our emphasis on regulation is not only a matter of convenience. We think associative democracy is most plausibly first advanced in areas where there is clear need of additional popular regulatory capacity. Without making too much of the point, this emphasis on an associative politics of regulation, as against simply representation, is one difference with Schmitter (see note 28), Iris Marion Young (*Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1990, and this volume, Chapter 11) and others focused more exclusively on problems in representation.

30. See above, pp. 242–3.

31. Or it can set them only in very abstract terms, for example, as requirements of 'reasonableness' or 'due care'.

32. The problem is complicated by the fact that the standards of business performance themselves – quite apart from more particular standards on products or processes – are continually shifting, especially in this age of 'continuous upgrading' as the accepted goal for advanced firms. See Charles Sabel, 'A Measure of Federalism: Assessing Manufacturing Technology Centers', *Research Policy*, forthcoming, for useful discussion. Taking this point seriously elides the distinction between this category of regulation and that considered immediately below.

33. Corresponding more or less to the first three classes of cases described above.

34. Though to the extent that they receive public support, they are to be subject to constitutional constraints, in particular guarantees of equal protection.

35. This claim depends, of course, on the background assumption of a democratic state protecting basic liberties and ensuring equal protection.

36. The carnival metaphor comes from Tom Peters, *Liberation Management*, New York: Fawcett Ballantine 1992, pp. 15–17.

37. In addition to the earlier essay printed here, see Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, 'Democracy and Associations', *Social Philosophy and Policy* 10 (Summer 1993), pp. 282–312; Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, 'Associative Democracy', in Pranab Bardhan and John Roemer, eds, *Market Socialism: The Current Debate*, New York: Oxford University Press 1993, pp. 236–52; and Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, 'My Utopia or Yours? Comments on *A Future for Socialism*', *Politics & Society*, 1994.

38. Robert Putnam (*Democracy and the Civic Community: Tradition and Change in an Italian Experiment*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1992) seems to have this view: if your associative environment is not good, your only option is to 'get a history'.

39. The discussion that follows draws on John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, New York: Columbia University Press 1993, lectures 1 and 4; Cohen, 'Pluralism and Proceduralism'; and Joshua Cohen, 'A More Democratic Liberalism', *Michigan Law Review* 92, 6 (1994), pp. 1503–46.

40. When a consensus on norms and values underlies and explains collective decisions, citizens whose lives are governed by those decisions may still be said to be independent and self-governing. Each citizen endorses the considerations that produce the decisions as genuinely moral reasons and affirms their implementation.

41. On the ideas of overlapping consensus and political conception of justice, see Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, lecture 1.

42. Robert Dahl (*Democracy and its Critics*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1989) suggests this. He discerns a 'rough pattern' in the idea of the intrinsic equality of human beings 'has steadily gained strength as an element in the constitutional consensus and political culture' (ibid., p. 187) along with the associated requirement of giving equal consideration to the interests of citizens. Dahl urges that stable democracy requires constitutional consensus – a widespread belief in the value of democratic process and 'habits, practices, and culture' (ibid., p. 172) suited to that belief. But he suggests as well that constitutional consensus tends to a deeper, overlapping consensus

extending beyond democratic process to 'an ever more inclusive commitment to ideas like intrinsic equality and equal consideration' (ibid., p. 179).

43. Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy*, pp. 7–46.

44. Ibid., p. 28.

45. Our case bears a certain affinity to Unger's 'negative capability' argument about the practical benefits that flow from less fixed forms of identity and less entrenched social practices, to Habermas's suggestions about a connection between social learning and more reflective forms of identity, and to Sabel's 'learning by monitoring'. See Unger, *False Necessity*, pp. 277–312; Jürgen Habermas, *Communication and the Theory of Society*, pp. 130–77; and Charles Sabel, 'Learning by Monitoring: The Institutions of Economic Development', in Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg, eds, *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1994, pp. 137–65.

46. Consider here most industry-specific regulation, which described an 'interest group' politics, intent on rent-seeking, widely taken to be definitive of modern regulatory efforts.

47. See Sabel, 'Learning by Monitoring'.

48. For evidence from cases directly known to us, see Joel Rogers, 'The Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership: A National Model for Regional Modernization Efforts?', in *Proceedings of the 46th Annual Meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association*, Madison: Industrial Relations Research Association 1994, pp. 403–11; and Joel Rogers, 'Sustainable Milwaukee: A Community Plan for Metropolitan Economic Development', unpublished mimeo 1994.