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Continuing our dialogue on affirmative action, the author argues that it is not only past discrimination that public policy must seek to remedy.

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Devolution: A Much Over Stated Case

“Devolution” is not exactly a household word. Pray it never will be. If the large-scale transfer of monies and missions from Washington to 50 state capitals is a way to curb government, then copy machines are a way to cut paperwork. True, state governments, which have become rather popular since the 1994 sea change in Congress, are not completely without merit. They can experiment in various ways to end welfare and reduce healthcare costs before the whole nation becomes committed to a new course. Furthermore, the states are closer to the people, at least in the narrow sense that citizens have to travel fewer miles to get to their state capital than to Washington. However, those who do make the voyage find it is no pilgrimage.

By practically any measure the typical state government is even less responsive to its citizens than Washington (whose record in this department is far from enviable). The major reason is that state legislatures are much less accountable than Congress and many are even more corrupt.

The problem starts with most state assembly members serving as part-timers. The standard length of a legislative session in New Mexico and Montana is 90 days every two years. The state of Washington’s legislature meets an average of 82.5 days per year, while Nevada’s legislators are only paid for 60 days every two years. For Wyoming, it is only an average of 30 days per year.

State legislators are legally entitled to work at other paying jobs, and practically all do, including at jobs that entail representing industries that the state governments are supposed to regulate. When I served as a staff director of a New York State Commission investigating nursing homes I learned that many members of the assembly
in Albany were lawyers on retainers from the nursing home lobby. They ended up rejecting most of the recommendations the commission made to clean up the industry in spite of rampant scandals headlined in the daily press.

In many state legislatures, written records of votes are not kept, making it possible for legislators to vote for special interests while telling the citizenry they voted in the public interest. Indeed, many state legislatures use “voice votes,” which means that an estimate is made about whether the nays or yeaahs sounded more numerous, without recording individual votes. For instance, in Florida an estimated 93 percent of all votes were disposed of in that manner.

Members of Congress often dash from one roll call to another (more than a thousand times a year) with little knowledge of what they are voting about. (A lobby opposed to the Clinton healthcare bill set it back by demanding a promise from Congress members not to vote for it unless they read it in its entirety at least once.) Instead Congress members rely on huge staffs. In the states, legislators typically have only minuscule staffs or none at all. In Rhode Island a new representative was recently dumbfounded when he discovered that one can find out which bill is up only two days before the vote, making proper preparation virtually impossible.

Outright corruption is far from unknown in Washington but distressingly rampant in the states. When the Maryland assembly allocates scholarships, many are allotted to children of politicians, their friends, and their supporters. Arizonan legislators have been indicted for accepting cash bribes to support a gambling bill. Florida legislators have been charged with accepting numerous gifts and junkets from lobbyists. When the FBI set up a sting in South Carolina, so many legislators showed up that they practically caused a traffic jam. The governor of Rhode Island was fined $30,000 for steering state contracts to friends and business associates.

A comparison of federal and state administration agencies is also revealing. The FBI is so squeaky clean, few would even think of offering a bribe to an agent; on the other hand, few need to think twice about greasing the palms of police officers in many parts of the country. Medicare (100 percent federal) shines in comparison to Medicaid (partly state-run). The IRS, not beyond reproach, is a
paragon of virtue when compared to state tax agencies. If you hate bureaucrats, shifting from Washington to the states will hardly help spell relief.

As a result of all this, the people of New York City hardly feel that Albany is much more understanding than Washington, D.C.; the citizens of Los Angeles and San Francisco do not feel particularly appreciated in Sacramento. And so it goes. All this should not come as a great surprise; after all, devolution is simply moving from one level of government to another, with little if any net reduction in government.

The solution is not simply to keep all the public’s business bottled up in Washington. For one, we may well be able to privatize some additional public missions. And state assemblies, if they are to be effective, need to become much more transparent and accountable, and enact limits on lobbies and campaign contributions. But above all, we need to bring social missions and funds close to the people—to the community level—where people can see what their government does. More public programs should be run as many public schools, our best hospitals, and numerous colleges are run now: by local boards, subject to federal guidelines and accounting. This is the way community-based organizations run economic development projects (e.g., launch a supermarket in a low-income area). It is also the way early HIV intervention programs are run by Community and Migrant Health Centers, which are funded, but not managed, by the Department of Health and Human Services. (The largest program funded this way is Head Start.)

A number of highly successful community programs have been killed by previous administrations that favored state block grants. The abandoned programs include neighborhood self-help development programs funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and community anti-crime programs in which the Department of Justice paid only for community organizers. The rest of the work, such as crime watch groups and marking property with identifiers, was done by community members themselves. These should be revived. Other programs could be delegated to communities working within federal guidelines. Local nonprofit organizations are ideally suited to generate community service jobs for those on
welfare who will not be able to find work in the private sector. Programs to curb teen pregnancy must be part of local schools, preferably as part of full-service health clinics. Community policing is a good idea—if the community is truly involved. Voluntary recycling, a low-cost answer to the flood of garbage, is a community job, not a state one. Increased parental involvement in education is best done neighborhood by neighborhood. And so are most other social missions.

We should re-read the 10th Amendment which declares that the powers not in the purview of the federal government “...are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” One never ceases to wonder at the wisdom of the Founders.

*Amitai Etzioni*

**The Brain: His and Hers**

An old story made page one news in the *New York Times* recently: “Men and Women Use Brain Differently, Study Discovers.” That headline could have run over a roughly similar story any time during the eighties. An enormous heap of scientific evidence on sexual differences has been accumulating for 15 years or more. Yet this story probably deserved front-page treatment because of the significant photo that ran alongside it. Old news: The brains of males and females are constructed differently, resulting in important differences in perceptions, emotional expression, priorities, and behavior. “The truth is that virtually every professional scientist and researcher into the subject has reached that conclusion,” Anne Moir and David Jessel wrote four years ago in their book, *Brain Sex.*

Despite this evidence, American culture still seems to operate on the broad assumption that sexual differences are unimportant, and that male and female brains essentially function the same way. In part, this is because of the civil-rights approach to the rise of women
in the work force. The vocabulary of this approach, borrowed from the race issue, tends to assume that any “underrepresentation” of women in any area must be due to oppression and bias, never to the free choice of women who may not be attracted to certain activities in the same numbers as men. Linking race (no proven brain differences) to sex (many proven differences) has guaranteed a large amount of confusion.

In part, too, the denial of differences is a holdover from the feminism of the seventies, which generally felt that sexual equality depended on minimizing or denying sexual differences. Even talking about sexual differences came to be seen as something of a betrayal of the women’s movement. This older view was displayed on national television recently when Gloria Steinem told ABC’s John Stossel that sexual differences shouldn’t even be studied. (This is a classic head-in-the-sand idea, but let’s admit that women have historic reasons to be wary of research into this area. It has been used repeatedly to restrict the kind of jobs open to women.)

So side by side we have a large body of evidence, and a curious refusal, based on politics, to acknowledge it. The photo that ran with last week’s study may help break down this resistance. It’s a magnetic resonance image of a male brain and a female brain attempting the same task—sounding out words. The image—apparently the first graphic, visual proof of difference in the brains—shows that the male used only a small part of the left side of the brain, while the female used both sides. The two halves of the male brain are connected by a smaller number of fibers than the female’s, and some scientists think this may help explain the male’s famous inability to express emotions: Information flows less easily from the right side to the verbal, left side.

The lead researcher on the project, Sally Shaywitz of Yale University’s School of Medicine, said she was surprised to see sexual differences in decoding words, “the pinnacle of what humans do,” far removed from the basic evolutionary pressures that produced different brain structures in males and females. The implication is that this is the tip of the iceberg—many more differences will show up in future scans.

The culture seems on the brink of yet another of those large psychic shifts. Popular bestsellers have begun to emphasize differ-
ences, not sameness: *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus,* for instance, or Deborah Tannen’s books. In the intellectual world, the long dominant idea that biology doesn’t matter much (because human culture is so powerful) is starting to come under heavy attack. “Difference feminists” argue that women’s “ethic of care” makes them radically different from men, and perhaps superior. The new glamorization of women’s colleges is partly due to identity politics, partly to irritation with men, partly to the idea that women and men have wholly different methods of learning. Ursuline College now offers a curriculum based on “women’s way of knowing.”

Two kinds of arguments are on the horizon. Are sexual stereotypes about to be smuggled back in under the cover of science? And if the sexes excel in different areas, is the public ready for the reality that some high-prestige, high-paying fields will be 75 percent male, some 75 percent female? The studies clearly show a large male advantage in visual-spatial abilities and higher mathematical reasoning. Every social explanation has been exhausted—this is innate. Only about 20 percent of American girls in elementary grades reach the average level of male performance in tests of spatial ability. And the U.S. Employment Service says that all classes of engineering and most scientific and technical occupations require spatial ability found in the top 10 percent of the population.

The best course of action would be to open all the doors and let girls and boys compete wherever they wish, without demanding anything like sexual quotas. But in a culture where males still hold most of the best jobs, this best course will be hard to defend.

*John Leo*

**The 1950s: Nostalgic Illusions?**

There are those who insist that any return visit to the communities and values of the 1950s is merely an indulgence in nostalgia, a
cleansing and oversimplifying of the past that makes it look beguilingly rosy and innocent from the vantage point of a few decades of history. There is no doubt that nostalgia plays strange tricks on us. It plays them in our individual lives, filtering out the complexities of childhood and adolescence, so that we see them as uncomplicated even if they were not always very happy. Perhaps, it can be argued, our societal memory works the same way: we filter out the complexity so that life always appears to have been simple and then to have come apart in the last generation.

After all, the desire to escape from rigid authority and stifling communities is what this country has always been about. It is the force that brought millions of people here from Europe and drove them west across the continent, leaving behind extended families, close-knit villages, and clearer sets of social rules. Perhaps those who talk about the decline of community and authority have merely been noticing some of the downsides of the American experience itself, and disguising those feelings in the mistaken notion that the country’s values were somehow different a generation earlier.

One can argue quite plausibly that the modern history of Western civilization is itself a history of eroding community and authority, reaching back to the Reformation, if not further; that the West has spent the last 500 years moving inexorably away from the values of tribe, hierarchy, and village life, and toward individualism and the market. Perhaps all we have done since the fifties is play out the process one generation further.

It is a tempting proposition, and it carries with it the potential to trump virtually all the arguments one can make about the losses of the past generation. It is a means of minimizing not just the eclipse of familiar social institutions but the transience of personal relationships and the decline of the notions of character and virtue. Relax, it urges us: all of this is normal. It is normal to worry about the quickening pace of society, the collapse of old standards, the depersonalization of everyday life. The task for the years ahead is not to nurse the memories of the old days; it is to prepare for the changed world of the twenty-first century.

It is a seductive piece of argument. But ultimately it does not work. It collapses in the face of all the tangible changes of the past 40
years that we cannot live through a day without encountering.

Nostalgic illusion does not explain the disappearance of lasting relationships between merchant and customer in the commercial life of a neighborhood or suburb. It does not explain the willingness of profitable corporations, in an unending quest for higher stock prices, to leave the communities that nurtured them. Those are genuine changes, and genuine losses. What does explain these changes is our worship of choice. It is true that in the fifties, traditionalists were already lamenting that the corner grocery store was not what it had been a generation earlier. But that does not argue against the magnitude of what has transpired between the fifties and the present, or suggest that it is somehow irrational to point out that some of the most important foundations of a stable neighborhood life are now gone.

Nor does nostalgia account for the public high schools where, in the fifties, the principal passed out ropes to boys who failed to wear belts, but where today the most offensive displays of speech, dress, and conduct are now regarded as individual liberties and protected from discipline. Only a wave of individualism and disrespect for authority is powerful enough to explain that. There is no denying that the parents and teachers of the fifties were already fearful of juvenile delinquency and youthful disrespect. But the realities of the nineties dwarf those concerns—not because of any nostalgic illusions but because the problem itself has expanded in geometric terms.

Memory may play tricks on all of us, but the flight from authority and the enshrinement of individualism and choice in the last 40 years do not represent lapses of memory, personal or societal. They represent losses that it is altogether rational to mourn.

Alan Ehrenhalt
“Every child deserves a father.”
—David Blankenhorn

Baseball’s not fun when there’s no one to applaud you when you hit a triple and a double and steal 2 bases including home.
Baseball’s not fun if there’s no one there to congratulate you after the game.
Baseball’s not fun when you catch the final popup to end the game.
If all these were just the opposite BASEBALL WOULD BE FUN.
—Ezra Moses Galston, age 10

A U.S. soldier and a Haitian child.

In Oklahoma City, a rescue worker and his son.
As this essay will show, the countries of the First World are currently faced with a perverse set of choices. To remain competitive in growing world markets, they have to take measures that damage the cohesion of civil societies. If they are not prepared to take such measures, they will have to resort to restrictions on civil liberties and political participation, restrictions that will amount to a new authoritarianism. At least this appears to be the quandary. The overriding task of the First World in the decade ahead is to maximize—to the extent possible—wealth creation, social cohesion, and political freedom, realizing that the promotion of any one of these goals may only be achieved at the expense of the others. This task may be impossible; but one can get close to it. And realistically, getting close may be all that a project for social well-being can hope to achieve.

PART I: IN DEFENSE OF THE FIRST WORLD

At its best, the First World was not a bad place in which to live (past tense intended). Did anyone ever call it the First World, or was the name merely a reference to the unmentionable Second World of communist oppression that has now all but disappeared, and the Third (later also the Fourth) World of destitution, disease, and despondency? Whatever the motive, let us not dismiss the First World too easily. At its prime, it combined three social virtues:
• economies that not only offered a decent life to many but which were set to grow and to open up opportunities to those not yet prosperous;

• societies that had taken the step from status to contract, from dependence to individualism, without destroying the communities in which people lived;

• polities that combined respect for the rule of law with those opportunities for political participation and for choosing governments that we have come to call democracy.

One may well ask when and where such wealthy, civilized, and enlightened countries existed. It is a considerable temptation to hide behind acronyms and refer to what is often called the OECD world, the membership of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. But let me overcome the temptation and name names. The United States of America in the period from Roosevelt to Kennedy (if not to quite the same extent before and after) is one example. Tens of millions of people from all over the world dreamed of living in America, and millions went to great lengths to get there. (Immigration rates are not the worst index of social well-being.)

This migration logic applies to other countries as well. The United Kingdom has long had a more even balance of emigration and immigration—except for the Irish, for persecuted Jews, and later for people from the poorer colonies—than the United States. But for long periods of this century it certainly belonged in the First World as here defined. So did parts of the former British Empire, the “temperate Commonwealth” as some call it in geographically correct—if politically incorrect—language: Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and a few other bits and pieces around the world. Then there are smaller European countries to mention: Switzerland, Sweden, and the other Scandinavian states. By the 1950s, when the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (which meant, above all, reconstruction) was turned into the OECD, most of Western Europe had become part of the “happy few.”

Their characteristics were, to repeat, economic opportunity, civil society, and political liberty. However, it would be testing the be-
nevolence of the reader beyond the permissible to leave such a smug statement without qualification. In fact, three major qualifications have to be added before a serious discourse becomes possible. Each of these qualifications could warrant an essay of its own, but I will summarize them here.

**Far From Perfect.** First of all, the First World in its heyday was flawed. All of its members excluded some individuals from the benefits of their achievements, and even from opportunities. The history of the United States is one long sequence of battles for inclusion—from the Civil War to the Civil Rights campaigns to today’s underclass. For the most part, the battles could be fought within the institutions of the country, which is worth noting. Moreover, they were fought not just by the excluded groups themselves; they had allies, in the Supreme Court for example. But U.S. society was never even nearly perfect in terms of economic opportunity, social inclusion, or political participation. To the present day (to mention just one of many shocking facts) the U.S. president is probably elected by no more than 15 percent or so of those who, by law, are entitled to vote.

The American imperfections may be more stark and visible, but those of the United Kingdom, Australia, Switzerland, or Sweden are no less important. Economic inequality meant that, for many, the promise of citizenship remained unfulfilled. The social conflicts of a hundred years ago were fierce. It took decades of internal struggles—class struggles as they were correctly called at the time—to assert the basic equality of all human beings in society. It also took two modern wars; horrible though it is to say this, there is no greater social equalizer than a modern war in which entire populations are involved. It was not an accident that the Second World War was called a “total war.”

These wars, to be sure, were not fought by the great democracies among themselves. They set civilized and not (not yet?) quite civilized countries against each other, those that had made it in terms of universal opportunity, and those that had not quite made it. I stress this point intentionally, and will even add a general thesis: The greatest risk to peace emanates from countries on the way from the
old cycle of poverty, dependence, and illiberty to the life chances here
described as those of the First World. When opportunities are held
out for people but are not yet there to grasp, when economic devel-
opment accelerates but social and political development lag behind,
a mixture of frustration and irresponsibility develops that breeds
violence.

Such violence can be individual and undirected, but it can also
become collective and directed against apparently happier neigh-
bors, more successful strangers in one’s midst, or both. While it is
likely that economic development coupled with political democracy
and a civil society will generate both an internal sense of tolerance and
peaceful international relations, the road that leads to such a state is
full of pitfalls and temptations. Imperial Germany and the Industrial
Revolution (to quote Thorstein Veblen’s title of 1915) is only one
example. Whenever a formerly traditional country embarks on this
road, the rest have good reason to be apprehensive (as well as
hopeful). But, as I will now show, this warning is not said to condemn
the rest of the world to poverty.

Citizenship and Inequality. The second qualification of my
initial thesis about the First World is that civil society—citizenship—
is incompatible with privilege for the few. This holds not just at
home—in a given country, where privilege is by the same token a
denial of the citizenship of others—but internationally, too. As long
as some people are poor, and moreover are condemned to remain
poor because they live outside the world market altogether, prosper-
ity everywhere remains an unjust advantage. As long as some people
have no rights of social and political participation, the rights of the
few cannot be described as legitimate. Systematic inequality—as
opposed to comparatively incidental inequality within the same
universe of opportunity—is incompatible with the civilized assump-
tions of the First World.

This is not simply a moral statement, but also presents a funda-
mental problem. Take immigration, which illustrates the problem. To
obstruct the free movement of people is, in principle, unacceptable for
free countries. Yet one appreciates that Switzerland, for example,
would put the quality of life of its citizens at risk if it allowed everyone who wanted to settle there to do so on equal terms. So what does that country do? It allows some people in because they can make a useful contribution by, for example, enabling the locals to avoid disagreeable jobs; but it turns these “guest workers” into second-class citizens who cannot vote and who can be sent “home” on short notice. Most, however, are not allowed in at all; and to implement such a policy, a whole machinery of control must be set up not only at the borders but also within the country. The humiliating experiences of asylum-seekers in many countries of the First World are an indictment of the latter’s claims to civilization. Yet there is no simple answer to the predicament.

Rather, there is only one answer, and it is not simple. It is the universalization of the benefits of the First World—what has come to be called development. Others are more qualified than I to express a view on this vast set of issues. We now know for sure, if we did not know before, that economic and social development is as much a matter of internal effort as it is of external assistance. We also know that large countries, notably in Asia but also in Latin America, have embarked so successfully on the road of economic development that the old First World is beginning to regard them as threats. When people speak of the Third World these days they mean, very largely, Africa; and by Africa they do not mean Tunisia or the liberated South Africa. Thus development can, and does, happen.

However, it is not only a precarious, but also a long process. Arguably, it takes humanity through the most threatening period of its history. The so-called population explosion; the dangers of military aggression, aggravated by the wide diffusion of lethal weapons; militant intégrisme, or less precisely “fundamentalism,” both of which emphasize the rule of faith rather than the rule of law; protectionism with regard to goods as well as to people—these and other evils are all possible and all too often real by-products of the early phases of development. They will be with us for generations to come. And yet the process is necessary, not because of any hidden hand of history—such Hegelianism is far from my Popperian way of thinking—but because the very values of an enlightened and civilized society
demand that privilege be replaced by universal entitlements, if not ultimately by world citizenship then by citizenship rights for all human beings in the world.

**Eternal Flux.** Add to the above two qualifications a third one, and the seemingly bright picture with which I began looks more overcast still. Actually, the third qualification has a great deal to do with Karl Popper, or with Herakleitos long before him: “panta rhei”—everything is in flux. Nothing lasts, not even the blessings of prosperity, civil society, and democracy. For good reason did I use the past tense when I referred to the achievements of the United States, the United Kingdom, and even Switzerland and Sweden. At times, one has a sense that the great age is over. At minimum, the great age is seriously under threat. Thus, having set the wider scene, it is these threats to the First World that I want to concentrate on in the body of this paper. I will then turn to a few modest recommendations for combatting their effects, and perhaps their causes.

**PART II: GLOBALIZATION—ITS CONSTRAINTS AND ITS CHOICES**

It would be possible to consider economy, society, and polity separately; in fact this has often been done. Economic growth is uppermost on government agendas in the OECD world, and their advisers—civil servants as well as professors—help them focus on the issue to the exclusion of all others. Will deregulation do the trick? Is inflation, after all, a helpful lubricant? How do taxes have to be levied to stimulate rather than to impede growth? Extreme proponents of “economism”—economics as a political ideology—either ignore or decry social factors. Was it not a prime minister who said that “there is no such thing as society” because she wanted to encourage individuals to fend for themselves? As for society, the dissolving, disintegrating quality of modern societies has been a theme for a century. Anomie, suicide, crime, the collapse of the family, the loss of religion—these were themes long before “community” became a correct word again. And so far as the polity is concerned, democracy has been in crisis as long as anyone can remember such a thing as political science. Governability was cer-
tainly an issue in the 1970s. But long before that, scholars and politicians were aware of the link between the economy, society, and polity, wondering why people turned against democracy when unemployment hit and the stock market collapsed.

Such allusions may help avoid the fallacy of historical uniqueness—though the opposite fallacy that history keeps on repeating itself is no less risky. There is, however, a case for saying that in the OECD world, economic, social, and political well-being are intertwined in a new and vexing manner. The reason is probably, in one word, globalization. It has become hard, and for most impossible, to hide in this world. All economies are interrelated in one competitive marketplace, and everywhere the entire economy is engaged in the cruel games played on that stage. There is no getting away from it, and the effect of globalization is felt in all areas of social life.

“Global”-ization? The skeptic will no doubt raise his or her eyebrows: Is this really so? And why should it be so? Moreover, what exactly does globalization mean? The skeptic would win, as of 1995, a good part of the argument. Globalization is, so far, by no means total. Whole economies, including that of China, are more national than global (though part of their national success is due to their global involvement). Economic regions are forming to provide common markets or free trade areas (though this may be a response to the new productive forces of globalization rather than their refutation). Within countries, important activities such as the provision of health services or of nursery and primary education—if not education in general—seem removed from global competition (though it cannot be an accident, or a mere fad, that the values of a globalizing economy have entered these services). It would certainly be possible to make a case for the imperfections of globalization at this point, though whether or not this would also be an argument against its force is another matter.

Why should globalization have happened at all, and why now? The obvious answers are probably the best. Whether the end of the Cold War is cause or effect may be a moot question; certainly the Soviet bloc countries were economically no longer viable. One reason was that the concept of country, or nation, lost a good part of its
economic meaning. This was a result of the emergence of transnational entities that found it surprisingly easy to combine a degree of adjustment to local needs with the advancement of worldwide strategic planning, direction, and profit making. Add to this the two related “revolutions” of information technology and financial markets, and an economic scene emerges the likes of which the world has never seen before. It is unique not only in terms of movements of money, but also in terms of services (such as booking airplane tickets). In the end, even terms of production and conventional physical boundaries begin to lose all meaning. Politics, technology, market pressures, and organizational innovations all conspire to create, in important areas of economic activity, a wholly new space that anyone—any company, any nation—ignores at their peril.

What then does such globalization mean? The most important answer is to the question not asked: What does it not mean? There has never been—as Michel Albert reminded us in his *Capitalism against Capitalism*—just one economic culture, even among the market economies. We have long sensed that Japan is different from the United States, and Germany from the United Kingdom. The differences are quite profound, even if they are badly understood. The rest of the world keeps on pressing Japan to open up its markets when one cause of their inaccessibility is the people’s ingrained tastes and another, let us face it, the Japanese language. The United Kingdom and Germany speak much the same language of economic policy, yet the United Kingdom’s textbook capitalism and Germany’s textbook corporatism create very different attitudes, especially since in the first case the textbook is one of economics and in the second, one of political science.

Such cultural differences will not disappear. To what extent they will continue to be national may be an open question. There is a certain cultural plausibility, after all, to the regions that are beginning to form: those of Europe, the Americas, and East and Southeast Asia. (It is also apparent that certain countries do not obviously belong, such as the United Kingdom in Europe and, perhaps increasingly, Japan in Asia.) Whatever these emerging regional structures will be like, the basic presumption remains that reactions to globalization
will differ despite the fact that the global marketplace requires some of the same virtues from all. Indeed, if it were not for such differences, the question raised in this paper would lose its meaning. Balancing economic growth, civil society, and political liberty is a universal task, but it would be foolhardy to assume that everybody will tackle it, or even try to tackle it, in these terms. For those who will, the assumption is that the goal can be approximated without losing out in the global marketplace.

The Universal Demands of the Economy. What then are the inescapable conditions of globalization? What, in other words, must be done everywhere if companies, countries, or regions do not want to condemn themselves to backwardness and destitution? To use the fashionable word, economic actors need, above all, “flexibility.” The word is intended to convey something desirable, though for many it describes the price they have to pay. Also, the word has so many connotations that it is hard to pin down any particular meaning. Yet without considerable flexibility, companies cannot survive in the world market.

Flexibility means in the first instance the removal of rigidities. Deregulation and less government interference generally help create flexibility; many would add a lighter burden of taxation on companies and individuals. Flexibility has increasingly come to signify the loosening of the constraints of the labor market. Hiring and firing become easier; wages can move downwards as well as upwards; there is more and more part-time and limited-term employment; workers must be flexible also and are expected to change jobs, employers, and locations of employment. The concept of flexibility brings to mind Schumpeter’s idealized figure of the entrepreneur and his “creative destructiveness.” Flexibility also means the readiness of all to accept technological changes and respond to them quickly. In marketing terms, it is the ability to move in wherever an opportunity offers itself, and also to move out when those opportunities are exhausted. The story is familiar enough, as is its accompanying language of structural adjustment, efficiency gains, competitiveness, and seemingly unending increases in productivity.
Yet choices remain. At least they are choices in theory; in practice they are just as likely to be brought about by circumstances, traditions, and irresistible pressures. One choice is between a low-pay and a high-skill economy. In practice, most countries will combine both in some ways, but there are important differences of emphasis. Low-pay economies find their place in the world market by undercutting others. Their products are cheaper, and their workers are poorer. One sometimes hears arguments that this is the only road to success; but the evidence is that such extreme economism is simply a mistake. A high-skill economy can also create a competitive advantage. This is the case not only because high skills advance the frontiers of technology, but also because certain quality products and product qualities require a skill input. Indeed, there even comes a point at which one highly skilled person, who costs less than five low-paid ones, produces the same effect. The United States seems to move in the direction of low pay, whereas Japan opts for high skill; the United Kingdom prefers low pay and Germany high skill.

One other point must be emphasized that concerns incomplete globalization. Despite the enormous force of the global marketplace, there is and always will be privileged access to markets. Even without explicit protectionism, the Japanese phenomenon exists everywhere to a greater or lesser extent. People will “buy American” in the United States, “buy German” in Germany, and even “buy British” in the United Kingdom if there are British products on the market. Regional trade arrangements are about extending these privileged markets. “Buy American” then means “buy NAFTA-American,” and “buy European” replaces national rallying calls. In classical economic terms, such regionalism introduces inflexibility; people will probably call it predictability, or security. The point should be borne in mind.

However, the options alluded to here are minor variations on the major theme of globalization. The forces of globalization are strong everywhere and bring with them pressure for greater flexibility, with all the implications listed earlier. By choosing one or the other variant, companies—even countries, for many of the choices invite government action—can take the edge off certain effects or give additional
emphasis to others; but one thing they cannot do is opt out of the
global marketplace. Even the attempt to stay in an older socioeco-
nomic age to serve the political purposes of dictators will not work for
any length of time, as the examples of Myanmar or Cuba, and
probably soon the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, show.

PART III: CIVIL SOCIETY UNDER PRESSURE

The term “civil society” is more suggestive than precise. It
suggests, for example, that people behave towards each other in a
civilized manner; the suggestion is fully intended. It also suggests
that its members enjoy the status of citizens, which again is intended.
However, the core meaning of the concept is quite precise. Civil
society describes the associations in which we conduct our lives, and
that owe their existence to our needs and initiatives rather than to the
state. Some of these associations are highly deliberate and sometimes
short-lived, like sports clubs or political parties. Others are founded
in history and have a very long life, like churches or universities.
Again others are the places in which we work and live—enterprises,
local communities, the family, etc.

The crisscrossing network of such associations—their creative
chaos, as one might be tempted to say—makes up the reality of civil
society. It is a precious reality, far from universal, itself the result of
a long civilizing process; yet it is often threatened, by authoritarian
rulers or by the forces of globalization.

Globalization threatens civil society in a variety of consequential
ways. The social effects of economic responses to the challenges of
globalization have become the subject of public and scholarly atten-
tion, especially in the United States. This is no accident. North
America is the home of modern civil society, where threats to its
strength are most acutely felt. Suddenly Tocqueville’s world, indeed
that of the Federalist authors, appears to be crumbling; The Disuniting
of America is the new theme, accompanied by fear, violence, and
versions of fundamentalism. It is small consolation that the United
States is not alone in this predicament. The following sketchy catalog
of pressures on civil society draws from European as much as U.S.
experience, and is at least in part applicable to other OECD countries as well.

**Globalization, Inequality, and Civil Society.** Economic globalization appears to be associated with new kinds of social exclusion. For one thing, income inequalities have grown. Some regard all inequalities as incompatible with a decent civil society; this is not my view. Inequality can be a source of hope and progress in an environment that is sufficiently open to enable people to make good and improve their life chances by their own efforts. The new inequality, however, is of a different kind; it would be better described as inequalization, the opposite of leveling. It builds paths to the top for some and digs holes for others, creating cleavages. The incomes of the top 10 to 20 percent are rising significantly, whereas the bottom 20 to 40 percent are watching their earnings decline. Robert Reich and others have made this observation the starting point of their search for remedies, though even the U.S. Labor Secretary has not been able to do much to reverse the trend. This systematic divergence of the life chances of large social groups is incompatible with a civil society.

The process is aggravated by the fact that a smaller but significant set of individuals seems to have fallen through the net of citizenship altogether. The concept and the phenomenon of the underclass are much discussed. (Not everybody likes the term, which is clearly misleading if one considers it in terms of class theory. The socially excluded are not a class; they are at most a category of people who have many different life stories.) Though some of them manage to get out of the predicament, many are in a position in which they have lost touch with the “official” world, with the labor market, the political community, and the wider society. Figures vary as to the size of the underclass, but most OECD countries now have in their midst what William Julius Wilson called “the truly disadvantaged”—would-be citizens who are non-citizens, an indictment of the rest of us.

Many of the truly disadvantaged are not just economically excluded, but also excluded as “strangers” by virtue of race, nationality, religion, or whatever distinguishing marks are chosen to provide excuses for discrimination, xenophobia, and often violence.
Declining social groups, such as the 40 percent whose real incomes have been falling for 10 years or more, are breeding grounds for such sentiments. Borders, including social boundaries, are always particularly noticeable for those closest to them. A wave of “ethnic cleansing” is not confined to war zones like Bosnia-Herzegovina, but threatens to engulf us all.

What does this have to do with globalization? As far as the new inequality—the increasing divergence of those near the top and those near the bottom—is concerned, it takes us back to the low-pay/high-skill alternatives. On the one hand, countries that have taken the low-pay route have produced a large group of “working poor.” On the other hand, high-skill countries begin to get accustomed to a significant group of long-term unemployed. Some people are—awful as it is even to put this on paper—simply not needed. The economy can grow without their contribution. Whichever way you look at them, they are a cost to the rest, not a benefit.

This experience has now hit middle-class individuals and families as well. While their problems may be milder for the individuals, they are more acutely felt by the nation as a whole. The latest wave of efficiency gains has reached, especially in large companies, all the way to the once hailed echelons of middle management. Such trends document a fundamental change in the world of work. No one would argue that there is not enough work to be done, but work at decent rates of pay is increasingly hard to come by. It is a privilege, not a realistic aspiration for all. Manufacturing and many services are following agriculture into a stratosphere of productivity in which half or fewer of those employed in the past can now produce twice as much output or more. What remains is a strange assortment of ill-paid personal-service jobs, numerous forms of hidden unemployment—some called “education,” others “self-employment”—and, in Europe, long-term unemployment for at least 5 percent, and probably soon 10 percent, of the population of employment age.

I have not offered here any probing thoughts about the conditions under which civil societies thrive. However, some simple analysis will make clear the tension created by growing inequality. Poverty
and unemployment threaten the very fabric of civil society. Civil society requires opportunities of participation which in the OECD societies (if not universally) are provided by work and a decent standard of living. Once these are lost by a growing number of people, civil society goes with them.

**Globalization, Flexibility, and Civil Society.** Let me move on to another set of social issues associated with economic globalization. Flexibility may be the opposite of rigidity, but it is also the reverse of stability and security, necessary components of civil society. One may fairly debate *how much* stability and security are needed to preserve civil society, but the economic response to globalization is intrinsically inimical to both stability and security. Uprooting people becomes a condition of efficiency and competitiveness; in addition, the dismantling of the welfare state is on the agenda everywhere.

Such developments may not be all bad; they are to some extent unavoidable. But the pendulum is swinging far in the opposite direction. The dual effect is the destruction of important features of community life and a growing sense of personal insecurity for many. Inner cities tell a shocking part of the story, aggravated by the tendency to erect suburban shopping centers at the expense of downtown markets and department stores. On the employment side, limited-term contracts—like part-time work—are fine for a while, notably for the young and the able-bodied and perhaps for childbearing women; but people, even children, do get older, and discovering at the age of 55 (and sometimes earlier) that one is no longer needed is enough to turn many into bitter activists.

Add to such phenomena the return of Social Darwinism under the pressures of globalization, and the concoction becomes even more lethal. At times one detects strange similarities, at least in Europe, between the end of the nineteenth and the end of the twentieth centuries. Then as now, people had been through a period of rampant individualism—Manchesterism then, Thatcherism now. Individuals were set against each other in fierce competition and the strongest prevailed—or rather those who prevailed were described as the strongest, regardless of the qualities that led them to their success.
Then, as now, there was a reaction. Around 1900, it was called collectivism. Today, this is a badly discredited word. However, the new vogue has a similar objective; it is called communitarianism.

Perhaps the most serious effect of adopting the values that go with flexibility, efficiency, productivity, competitiveness, and profitability is the destruction of public spaces and the decline of the services that go with them. The prevailing carrot-and-stick philosophy has overlooked and then attacked noneconomic motives—motives that lead people to do things because they are right, or because people have a sense of duty, a commitment. Introducing pseudo-economic motives and terms into public spaces robs these of their essential quality. A national health service, universal public education, basic income guarantees under whatever name—all become victims of an economism that is running amok. Small wonder that commuter transport, environmental protection, and public safety suffer in the process.

This gloomy picture is not the whole story, of course. Many people are better off than ever before. They have more choices not just of dishwasher fluids and television channels but of education and leisure pursuits. They live longer. They grumble, but perhaps they should, if it helps them to do something about the objectionable things they see. (Readers of Albert Hirschman will have noticed more than a trace of Exit, Voice and Loyalty in these comments.) Yet there can be little doubt that the economic challenges of the global marketplace have not helped civil society. One analytical footnote may help put flesh on this assertion and also provide a link to the issues of political liberty to which we must turn.

I have spoken of the underclass, of the marginalized, and of people giving voice to their concerns. Why is there no massive movement to defend civil society? Where is the twentieth century equivalent of the labor movement of the late nineteenth century? It does not yet exist, and likely never will. For reasons that antedate the challenges of globalization, individualization has not just transformed civil society, but social conflicts too. Many people may suffer the same fate, but there is no unified and unifying explanation of their
suffering, no enemy that can be fought and forced to give way. More importantly, and worse still, the truly disadvantaged and those who fear to slide into their condition do not represent a new productive force, nor even a force to be reckoned with at present. The rich can get richer without them; governments can even be reelected without their votes; and GNP can rise and rise.

Individualized conflict is by no means easier to handle—to regulate—than organized class or other struggles. On the contrary, it means that people have no sense of belonging or commitment to the society, and therefore no reason to observe the law or the values behind it. It seems hard to dispute the observation that social disintegration is associated with a degree of active disorder. Young men, and increasingly young women—as well as many who are not so young—see no reason to abide by prevailing rules that for them are the rules of others. They opt out of a society that has already pushed them to the margin. They become a threat. Those who can afford it pay for protection. Those who cannot afford protection become victims. A sense that something has gone badly wrong—a sense of anomie (Durkheimians might say) or lawlessness and deep insecurity—is spreading.

PART IV: TEMPTATIONS OF AUTHORITARIANISM

The condition of global competitiveness coupled with social disintegration is not favorable to the constitution of liberty. Freedom and confidence go well together—confidence in oneself, in the opportunities offered by one’s environment, and in the ability of the community in which one lives to guarantee certain basic rules—the rule of law. When such confidence begins to crumble, freedom soon turns into a more primordial condition, the war of all against all. Who thrives in a such state of anarchy? The warlord, the impostor, the speculator, the jester if he is lucky enough to find a protector—but not the citizen, for he no longer exists. Everyone else becomes a victim. People do not like the prospect, especially if they had once been citizens. They begin to doubt the wisdom of the fathers of their constitutions if liberty leads to anomie. They look for a way out, for authority.
It is important to turn dramatic, metaphorical language into precise analysis. We must also consider the political approach of non-OECD countries. Competitiveness no longer means that Europe and North America just have to keep up with Japan, their fellow-OECD member. There are new players, notably in Asia, who are not yet, and perhaps never will be, OECD members. Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other countries with a Chinese business class began the change towards increasing the number of serious world players. They were soon joined by the Republic of Korea and Thailand. Then China itself followed suit. From little more than 5 percent of world exports in 1980, the Asian tigers and dragons plus China moved up to nearly 15 percent by 1994; since the mid-1980s the GNP of these countries has been growing at almost three times the rate of the OECD countries.

More importantly, the new Asian economies, or at least their political spokesmen, show no sign of emulating European ways. The Asia That Can Say No is the title of a book by the Malaysian prime minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohammed, that sets out a “policy to combat Europe and America.” (The title is adapted from the earlier Japanese best-seller by Shintaro Ishihara, The Japan That Can Say No.) Dr. Mahathir’s thesis is simple and it has often been propounded by Senior Minister Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore and other spokesmen of Singapore’s government. It is that Asia can compete with anyone in world markets without abandoning its values. No bricked-up inner cities, no underclass, no drugs, and no crime for Asia! Social cohesion—some say Confucianism—will remain the moral basis of life, and will not interfere with economic growth. Indeed, such values may contribute to growth.

And how are the dreaded Western values supposed to be kept out? By strong government, is the answer. Authoritarianism is not totalitarianism. Law-abiding citizens who assiduously attend to their own affairs and otherwise live inoffensive private lives need not fear the wrath of their leaders. The permanent and total mobilization of all by the state that characterizes totalitarian régimes will not happen. Among other things, it would be incompatible with a successful modern economy. But those who criticize government for its unac-
countable power, those who use their freedom of speech to expose nepotism, those who dare put up alternative candidates in elections—these people are in trouble. The limits of civic freedom are tightly drawn.

Is this, then, the alternative with which modern societies are faced: one choice being economic growth and political freedom without social cohesion, and the other being economic growth and social cohesion without political freedom? And is the “Asian” alternative both viable and acceptable to Westerners? More and more people in the OECD world think so. Many in business like the Asian model, and conservative politicians from Margaret Thatcher to Silvio Berlusconi agree. Asian values have become the new temptation, and political authoritarianism with them. Abandon the U.S. model, suggests the new wave, and look to Asia for a new model of how economic progress can be combined with social stability and conservative values.

A Look at History. The story is not as new as it sounds. Under different names it has accompanied modern economic development for over a century. After all, Imperial Germany was a case of a combination of the industrial revolution with an authoritarian régime. But we must not forget that it took a long and murderous century for Germany to grow out of this fallacy.

For countries that embrace modern economic ways before their societies have become civil and their polities democratic, the temptation of authoritarianism is great indeed. (The same is actually true for countries that attempt the economic and political transition from the tyranny of a leader or a party to an open society at the same time.) In the early stages, the creation of a market economy invariably requires sacrifices from the people subjected to it. It requires what is called delayed gratification, or—in economic terms—savings (investment before consumption). People will have to work hard for low wages and tolerate miserable working and living conditions before their countries manage to turn the corner and join the developed world. Such sacrifices are rarely if ever made voluntarily. Even Max Weber’s thesis of the usefulness of Calvinism—an early analogue to today’s
Confucianism—begs the question of whether it was religious beliefs or authoritarian governments that made people forgo the fruits of their labor. It is hard to think of an example where ascetic values were not reinforced by strong secular powers.

But for the most part, the situation did not last. Capitalism itself changed, to be sure, from saving to spending and on to borrowing. As it progressed, however, society and politics also changed. Increasingly (so the West would like to believe) people demand a share of the wealth they produce; they also want to be masters of their own lives. They want to travel and watch television and choose their own neighbors. They want to have a say in their affairs, the vote, the right to form associations, the ability to tell a government to go away. Civil society and political liberty seem to follow economic development if they do not precede it. But do they always?

The test of history rarely yields unambiguous results for such large theories. Still, this particular one is being tested every day in Asia, and particularly in Japan. There are signs that Japan will go down the Western route, mutatis mutandis, which is one reason why Asian leaders criticize it almost as much as the United States. But theories can be wrong; once again there is no inexorable march of History. It is possible that a new Asian—essentially Chinese—balance will be found that combines world competitiveness in economic terms with a social cohesion that is traditional rather than civil, and with authoritarian political régimes. It is also possible that such an example will affect European leaders and voters, and that a growing number will wish to go down a similar route at the risk of abandoning some of the cherished rights and liberties of the European and North American tradition. The temptations of such authoritarianism are considerable. They are likely to arise in many policy areas. To mention but a few potentially popular positions:

- Integrating the young into society is no longer easy. Where families fail, schools cannot succeed. Labor markets are not exactly waiting for newcomers. Many young people begin to drift and to embrace antisocial behavior. People want to see them
disciplined. Someone should be able to tell them what to do, people may say, and to punish them if they do not obey.

- Punishment is also the main demand of those who speak incessantly about law and order. The caning of an American youth (who was charged with vandalizing cars) in Singapore has led to official protests but much private gloating in the West. The cane, it is said in pubs around Europe, should be brought back. The police should be given greater powers. Life in prisons should be really hard. The death penalty should be reintroduced.

- The welfare state must be reformed and that cannot be done without hardship. But such hardship, people think, should hit first the scroungers who live on other people’s money without contributing anything themselves. If people do not want to work, they must be made to do so, or not get anything. Parents who do not look after their children must, if necessary, be forced to do so.

- All too often liberty has become license. The behavior of people in public is, some people think, disgusting. Unkempt men drinking beer in public places, half-undressed girls cavorting about, no one paying respect to the elderly or the infirm—all of this is not surprising, perhaps, in view of the media and the tabloids; but it still must be stopped.

- The invasion of foreigners simply cannot go on. In state schools local children have become a minority, and teachers offer prayers in several religions. Somehow this mess must be sorted out again, and England returned to the English, Germany to the Germans, France to the French, etc.

It would be only too easy to go on. Nor are these the most extreme demands for change. One could probably quote a respectable academic author to give reasons for every one of them. They all add up to the demand for a régime that is less tolerant, one that enforces values at the risk of violating civil rights as we have come to know them, and one that cannot simply be removed by an election. It would be an agreeable side effect, in the view of the supporters of the above
positions, that such a government could guarantee economic competitiveness without having to listen to disgruntled trade unions, or to special-interest groups from Greenpeace to animal-rights campaigners, or to local environmentalists, or indeed to political parties, which are unpopular whatever their persuasion may be.

It is not easy to assess the strength of authoritarian sentiments of this kind in the OECD world. Not everything said by a businessman or a taxi driver in a moment of exasperation amounts to demands for a régime change. There are signs that some of the solutions hinted at will be promoted by perfectly law-abiding democratic forces. Some suspect that law and order will dominate the political agenda to such an extent that perpetrators are bound to face harsher treatment (whatever that means precisely). It would not be surprising to see the death penalty reintroduced in countries that abolished it for good reasons. Certainly, the time of adjustment to global competitiveness—with its economic cost for many, social disintegration with the attendant discomforts and pains, and lack of confidence in traditional political parties and leaders—tests the ability of democracies to promote change without violence and without violation of the rule of law. One wonders who the first OECD leader is going to be who gets up and says: “Give me 10 years, and I promise the trains will run on time again!”

**PART V: SOME MODEST PROPOSALS**

While we wonder about risks, we must not forget to think about solutions. We want prosperity for all, and that means acceptance of the needs of competitiveness in global markets. We want civil societies that hold together and provide the basis of an active and civilized life for all citizens. We want the rule of law and political institutions that allow change as well as critical discourse and the exploration of new horizons. These three desires are not automatically compatible. The challenges of globalization require responses that threaten civil society. The onset of anomie gives rise to the temptation of authoritarianism, which is more tempting to some based on the perceived success of the Asian model. So what can be done to
preserve a civilized balance of wealth creation, social cohesion, and political freedom?

One feature of the Popperian approach to problems is that it shuns comprehensive solutions. Whoever claims to have the answer to every question answers none. Total solutions will aggravate rather than improve matters. This means, however, that viable answers are bound to look woefully inadequate in comparison to the dimension of the problem. The six suggestions that I propose to discuss briefly, to give some substance to the analysis, all fall into this category. They are beginnings, no more.

Social GNP. We must change the language of public economics. It is remarkable how unquestioningly we have adopted in public discourse the concept of “economism,” even though many leading economists have moved away from it. For governments, let alone for international organizations, GNP growth is still the primary obsession. Sometimes politicians are surprised if growth remains “jobless” (and hence voteless); even with growth of 3 percent, few new jobs are created and opinion polls continue to show the government in a dim light. Something is missing. Some call it the “feel-good factor.”

The inventors of GNP accounting, great men like Samuelson or Arrow, speak of the limitations of this yardstick as much as its uses. In response, others have tried to develop supplemental yardsticks. In a recent book, Partha Dasgupta contrasts destitution (his main subject) with “well-being,” even “social well-being.” He, as well as Amartya Sen before him and Meghnad Desai after him, tried to introduce measures for aspects of well-being not included when we speak of gross national product—measures of human rights for example, or of democracy. Clearly, wealth is more than per capita GNP. Whether we want to spend much time and energy to produce one complex measure of wealth, or well-being, may be an open question. The answer is probably no. But governments and international organizations should be encouraged to add other information every time they produce GNP figures, such as information about trends in inequality, measurable opportunities for people, and human rights and liberties. A proper wealth and well-being audit
should take the place of a single simple and often misleading figure. This will bring much-needed attention to the relative health of civil society and political freedom of nations and, at least from the perspective of language, balance these important concerns with that of economic growth.

**Linking school and work.** The new world of work makes it imperative that proper provisions be made for young people to pass through a phase of vocational training that is closely related to real jobs and ends up in a period of regular employment. The nature of work is changing. Increasingly, a single career for life is the exception rather than the rule. Over a lifetime, people will have been in and out of work, employed full-time or part-time, in training and retraining. In some ways the experience of women will become the general norm, to the chagrin of many young men. Such changes have many implications—for example entitlements must not be tied to particular jobs.

More importantly, however, this whole transformation can work only if everyone has, at an early stage, gained some experience of the labor market. Education does not solve all problems; young people understandably ask where it is leading them. But education linked to employment at the critical age—16 to 19, or so—provides a basis of experience and of motivation that can sustain people through a lifetime of changes. Conversely, if the early opportunity to encounter the uses of education and the constraints of the labor market is missed, much if not all is lost. We should look at the best practices in this area and try to apply them more generally. By providing training and preparation for the job market, a nation prevents the perpetual creation of an underclass, the existence of which threatens civil society.

**Reaching out to the underclass.** The truly disadvantaged—the underclass—present an almost unmanageable problem. Clearly, just offering opportunities to those who have fallen through the net is not enough. People will not take such chances without much more inducement. Many have become indolent and accustomed to a life at the margin. Everything that can be done to include the excluded underclass must be done.
Yet the more critical task is, in the words of the British parliamentarian and reformer Frank Field, to cut the supply routes to tomorrow’s underclass. We may not be able to do enough for those already excluded, but we must prevent another generation from having the same dismal experience. In part, vocational training for all may do the trick. Possibly some form of universal national service would aid the integration of all into the values of a changing society. Community building through housing and the creation of public spaces might also help.

The issue clearly needs further exploration. But turning public attention from the remedial to the prospective, from helping today’s underclass to preventing the emergence of tomorrow’s, would itself help. Advocating international conferences is always a bit of a cop-out; but some agency or other would surely find it attractive to try to bring together expertise and imaginative thought on this subject. It is crucial that we find ways to provide these individuals with the economic opportunities that are necessary to fulfill the promise of citizenship that the OECD countries offer.

**Sustaining local communities.** Globalization means centralization. It individualizes and centralizes at the same time. Intermediate agencies—indeed, civil society—are to some extent obstacles on the path to globalization. There is a sense in which competitiveness in world markets helps destroy communities. But this does not have to be the case. It is possible to counteract the simultaneous pressures towards individualization and centralization by a new emphasis on local power. The word “local” is deliberately chosen. Nations within nations—such as Wales, Quebec, or Catalonia—do not have the same effect. They may contribute to a general sense of belonging, but as a principle of social and political organization they divide and produce unhelpful rigidities. (The so-called Europe of Regions is, from this point of view, at best an irrelevance and at worst a mistake.)

Local communities, on the other hand, can provide a practical basis for vocational training, for small and medium-sized businesses, for personal involvement and participation, for strengthening the public domain—in short, for civil society—without detracting from
economic imperatives. Some countries like Switzerland, and some parts of Germany have much experience in this regard; France and Britain, on the other hand, have suffered from ignoring the potential of local power. As always, there is no general blueprint for sustaining local communities, but some form of political identity, from revenue-raising powers to elected mayors, undoubtedly helps.

**Stakeholder involvement.** Local power is but one factor in the wider concept of stakeholder economy. Some economists, notably in the United States, do not like the concept. They think that shareholders are the only stakeholders and that the actions of shareholders keep businesses on the straight and narrow. Leaving vast cultural differences—as well as the fact that most shareholders nowadays are institutions—aside, the point about stakeholders is that (contrary to shareholders) they cannot put their interest in companies up for sale. The workforce, the local community, banks, and even suppliers and buyers are, as it were, stuck with the companies to which they are committed. This can be regarded as an undesirable rigidity only in an inhuman world in which it does not matter whether firms are bought or sold, taken over, merged, extended, reduced, or closed as long as the shareholders get a maximum yield for their investment. In truth it does matter.

What is more, competitiveness is not increased by lack of commitment, especially if companies choose to go down the high-skill rather than the low-pay route. Reliability and predictability have their own value in business relations across the globe. Recognition and involvement of stakeholders is the practical answer. This can be brought about in many ways, from work councils for employees to the involvement of banks in investment decisions, from business participation in school boards to the activity of local chambers of commerce. Moreover, organized stakeholder relations are only a part of the story; it is attitudes that matter, an awareness of connections, and a commitment to concerns that, in the end, serve most people best. Civil society will be buttressed by this new commitment to the stability and security of communities.
A positive role for the state. Little has been said in this essay about the role of governments. Acceptance of the fact that in the global marketplace the actors are transnational companies, and a preference for the creative chaos of civil society, seem to leave governments out. Yet they clearly are not out of the picture. Nor are they simply the guardians of the rules of the game, as some liberal theorists would have it. At the very least, governments set the tone for the economy and for society more generally.

Beyond that, governments have a special responsibility for the public domain. Public services require by definition government involvement in funding and administration. Much depends on how such involvement is expressed, both in terms of the value placed on service as a human activity and in terms of the organization of public services. It is quite possible that some OECD countries have gone further in using the public service model than they can afford, or even than is good for the quality of service. It is also possible that in reacting to the experience, some have introduced so-called business values into the public sphere to a point at which both the intended service and the general readiness for commitment suffer. A new balance must be found. Health care is quite likely to provide the main example, given its importance for individuals, its cost, and its location on the borderline between global economic constraints and local or even national opportunities. Reassessing the role of the state is now more important than ever, when the authoritarian approach seems to be gaining favor in some circles.

This list leaves out many matters that need consideration. Above all it leaves undecided the critical question of the institutional—one might almost say, the geopolitical—response to the challenges of globalization. Regional blocs of some sort may be where the world is headed. The cultural debate on Asian vs. European values, which underlies the project of universal development, points to the possible significance of such blocs. It is, however, a key part of European—or perhaps OECD—values never to lose sight of the truly universal nature of the project for the next decade. We are talking about prosperity for all, civil society everywhere, and political freedom.
wherever people live. This means that in the end we must be concerned not with privileged regions but with one world and its appropriate institutions.
The national dialogue on affirmative action falls short on a number of counts, but perhaps the most significant flaw is that, in our desire to achieve a “color-blind society,” we seem to be having a discussion about the remedy while ignoring the true nature of the problem. A case in point is that some critics, such as Senator Bob Dole, claim that affirmative action programs punish Americans for the sins of their fathers. Such a perspective would have us believe that discrimination is a thing of the past and that what is called “affirmative” action is in fact exclusively “remedial” action.

While we might like to think that discrimination in the labor market has not been relegated to the dustbin of history, unfortunately the measurements we have tell us otherwise. The data supporting this includes labor-market research, which time and again demonstrates that equally qualified blacks and Hispanics earn between 10 and 40 percent less in the labor market than their white counterparts. There are also employer surveys, such as that done by the General Accounting Office, which found that nearly 20 percent of the four million employers in their survey—eight hundred thousand—admitted to employing discriminatory hiring practices that would result in discrimination against people who look or sound foreign based on accent and surname. And a University of Chicago survey of that city found that nearly 70 percent of employers acknowledged to interviewers that they made distinctions based on race and ethnicity, and relied on these distinctions in their employment practices.

Such surveys are supported by recent empirical experiments. Nationwide, a number of organizations—the Urban Institute, the Fair Employment Council of Washington, the Massachusetts Human Rights Office—have conducted what is called “employment auditing” or “hiring testing” research. Such tests involve sending equally
qualified testers to employers and referral firms. Each participant is then tracked for how far they get in the employment process. And in each and every case there is a 20 to 30 percent net difference in discrimination against Latinos and African-Americans. Knowing this, it is difficult to listen to critics who focus solely on the inadequacy of the remedy—the inadequacy of affirmative action.

The reality is that the commonly offered alternatives to affirmative action already have proven to be inadequate. Critics of affirmative action say that all we need is vigorous enforcement of civil rights laws. Again, though, the statistics reveal the weaknesses of such an approach. The Department of Housing and Urban Development has estimated—based on the Housing Discrimination Survey—that there are somewhere between two and four million incidents of housing discrimination in this country annually. Yet the total number of complaints and lawsuits filed to uphold the Fair Housing Act, in response to these incidents, averages less than twenty thousand per year. The story is similar with employment discrimination. As the earlier cited data show, there is 20 to 30 percent labor market discrimination just at the hiring stage, not to mention promotions, salaries, and so on. Yet the total number of complaints received nationwide by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is about seventy-five thousand.

If this rate of “arrest”—a fraction of one percent—was similar for murder, rape, or most any other crime, there would be a public outcry. Enforcement would rightfully be considered a disgrace. Yet it is this dismal prosecutorial record that many are asking minorities to place their faith in. Unfortunately, in our desire for a “color-blind society,” we seem to ignore these simple realities.

Affirmative action may be an imperfect solution. Most of us have dreams of a color-blind society, and programs that focus on racial and gender differences would seem to run counter to such dreams. Critics contend that affirmative action programs exacerbate our focus on race and prevent our nation from moving beyond race. However, it takes a curious interpretation of history to blame affirmative action for race consciousness in this society. There was no affirmative action in my hometown—Weslaco, Texas—in the sixties and seventies. But of course there was racism. America’s focus on race predates affirma-
tive action, and continues regardless of the existence of such programs. To blame affirmative action for race consciousness in this society strikes me as a little backwards. And given the overwhelming data, to say that affirmative action is addressing issues that are no longer relevant strikes me as, at best, naive.

**Communities Within Communities**

Betsy and Clifton introduced a new variation of an old practice during their wedding at the All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C. Instead of asking the members of the congregation to turn to one another to shake hands, embrace, or kiss as a sign of peace, as is customary in many religious services, the couple asked the attendees to turn first to those with whom they share vows, and then to turn to others.
The issue of tax credits for children strikes at the heart of two vital concerns: How should the tax system be adjusted to account for family size; and how should it treat individuals who move beyond welfare by working or by marrying someone with income?

Taking as given a commitment toward a fiscally responsible budget with lower deficits, I will outline here two primary cases for a tax credit. First, much of tax policy is concerned with the allocation of the tax burden rather than its total level—the slicing of the pie, not merely its size. A strong case can be made that the current system adjusts inadequately for the presence of children and that households with children pay substantially higher taxes than other families with equal ability to pay. Even a credit of $1,500 would be insufficient to restore the relative value of the dependent exemption provided in 1948.

Second, a credit for children provides one way to attack the extraordinarily perverse incentives of our combined welfare and tax systems. For individuals on welfare, the increase in income brought about by a return to work is often close to zero; and couples typically will find their combined income fall by 20 percent or more simply by taking a marriage vow.

RE-VALUING CHILDREN

If the dependent exemption in the income tax had been adjusted since 1948 to grow at the same rate as income per person, today it would be about $9,657 rather than $2,500. The value of a $9,657 dependent exemption—that is, its value if converted to a credit—would be worth about $1,642 per child. Far from being radical, therefore, current proposals of a $500 credit do not even come close
to restoring the types of adjustments that used to be made for the presence of children.

The income tax is meant to adjust for households’ ability to pay. Ability to pay, in turn, is affected by the size of the household. An adjustment for dependents can be made either through credits or, as at present, through exemptions. If this year’s dependent exemption of $2,500 were adequate, then in theory it would imply that a couple with two dependents and $50,000 of income ($12,500 per person) has the same ability to pay tax as a family with half as many members—that is, a couple with no dependents—and $45,000 of income ($22,500 per person). After all, the current tax code charges them the same amount of taxes.

It doesn’t take much reflection to realize that most families are required to spend more than $2,500 per year on the food, clothing, housing, education, insurance, and health care of their children. Yet on a per person basis, the current tax code implies that the family in the example with $22,500 per person is not any better off than the family with $12,500 of income per person.

The argument here is not that the government should cover the normal costs of raising children, only that the tax burden should be adjusted to take some of these costs into account. The goal of the income tax is primarily to measure ability to pay tax according to family size and then to tax equally those who have equal ability. All tax systems explicitly or implicitly must decide how to treat different size families and how to vary that treatment according to the presence of spouses and dependents. And our tax system has clearly shifted more of the burden towards households with dependents.

The relative decline in the value of the dependent exemption over the past few decades has led to a significant expansion of the personal income tax base, at least relative to income in the economy. A large expansion in the use of credits, deductions, and exclusions also occurred over the same time, leading to a reduction in the tax base. These historical changes, however, did not apply equally to all types of taxpayers. They increased substantially the share of the tax burden for households with dependents. Meanwhile the share of the tax burden declined for others, in particular those who could make use of other tax breaks. A primary reason for providing a child credit or
allowance, therefore, is simply that it would be a means of adjusting for ability to pay by family size—a principle of equity that has been ignored for some time now.

**WARPED INCENTIVES, WARPED RESULTS**

As long as we live in a society that is going to provide some minimum amount of well-being to children, we must worry about pernicious signals and incentives—Don’t Work! Don’t Marry!—that apply especially to those low-income persons who have the potential to move beyond welfare. This is a structural issue that cannot be avoided; it is not an issue of liberal or conservative leanings.

Under current law, many benefits are provided for children through welfare or welfare-like payments. To help keep the costs of these programs down, the benefits are phased out as the income of the family rises. Many lower- and moderate-income individuals find that if their family income goes up by $1.00 due to work, they must return 70 cents, 80 cents, or more to the government in direct taxes or reduced benefits. In many cases, especially when account is made for costs of transportation or child care, people who work are actually made poorer as a consequence of working.

For almost all welfare recipients, marriage will cause them to be significantly poorer. Marriage will typically cause the combined income of a couple to fall by 20 percent or more. Thus a couple who marry must simultaneously decide to force their children to live a much poorer life. By the same token, divorce for many middle-income couples would increase their combined income substantially under current law. A child credit need not increase the payments made to those already on welfare; nor would it eliminate their participation in the welfare system. The approach mainly provides a mechanism to reduce—from their presently confiscatory levels—the combined tax rates for low-, moderate-, and middle-income individuals who decide to work or marry.

The perverse nature of incentives in the current system also weakens our ability to work together as a society. Many welfare recipients, for instance, work part-time for low amounts in an “infor-
mal” sector where wages are not recorded or reported to the government. Many others live in informal relationships and share households in ways that avoid formal marriage commitments. Still others combine their resources in ways common to any family. In a backhanded way, some of this behavior contains social benefits; at least it involves cooperative, productive, and community-sharing efforts. When it is made to violate the tax and welfare laws, however, it breeds disrespect for the law and restricts individuals from engaging in more formal personal relationships where commitment is recognized through marriage and work contracts.

A MORE SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

Here I would like to suggest three further issues. First, a tax credit provides a reasonable way of adjusting lifetime tax burdens according to one’s differing ability to pay in the different stages of one’s life. Second, adjustments for the presence of children are appropriate at all income levels and need not reduce the progressivity of the income tax. Third, the child credit might be integrated more fully with other efforts at welfare reform. In that regard, attention needs to be given to those low-income individuals who are not on welfare and would receive neither welfare nor tax benefits for a child.

Adjusting Taxes for Lifetime Circumstances. In some ways, the goal of a child allowance is merely to adjust taxes and expenditures according to the lifetime circumstances of individuals. The child-rearing years are normally among the poorer years that individuals face over their lives. A child is usually born during the parents’ earlier years in the work force—before they have acquired seniority and much of the human capital that comes with work experience. For couples, of course, child rearing either requires significant outlays for child care or a decline in personal income. For single heads-of-household with only one adult to handle both child care and work in the marketplace, the cost of rearing children may be even higher relative to total income in the household. Whatever the reasons, recent statistics demonstrate that children are now the poorest group in the population mainly because of their prevalence in younger households with lower wages.
By the time children are gone from the household, on the other hand, other economic circumstances usually have improved. Wages tend to be higher. In addition, assets are usually greater and debt lower; substantial equity may exist in a house and a car or two.

The provision of a child credit or allowance, therefore, simply attunes the tax system more to the life cycle circumstances of most households. When income is lower and the costs of child care higher, the tax system would provide a modest reduction in tax. In later years, when the household is usually better off, taxes would be higher because of the absence of such an adjustment.

Family-Size Adjustments and Levels of Income. Some argue that if there is to be a child credit, it should be phased out as families move into middle- or upper-income status. At fairly high income levels this philosophy is reflected slightly in current law through a phase-out of the dependent exemption. But such an approach is not justified. Family-size adjustments are appropriate at all income levels since children reduce the average income within the household, lessen average consumption levels, and leave less discretionary income from which taxes can be paid.

A closely associated mistake is to believe that child allowances shouldn’t go to middle-income or high-income persons because somehow this would reduce the progressivity of the system (the relative tax burdens paid by those of different income levels). Such a view is incorrect. Suppose, for instance, that society believes that two families with $50,000 of income each (or $100,000 in total) should together pay total taxes, after child allowances of $20,000. Suppose additionally that one family has two children and the other none. A choice still remains: society can decide that taxes, less child allowances, should be $10,000 each or $9,000 for the family with children and $11,000 for the family without children. In either case, child allowances have no effect on the total tax burden paid by those with $50,000 of income. The child allowance simply recognizes that the cost of raising children is one source of differentiation in the needs and abilities of all households. Indeed, a strong case can be made that treating the two families with $50,000 of income the same is quite inappropriate. It is equivalent to treating children as nonentities or consumption goods of adults rather than as living members of the community.
The Relationship Between Tax and Welfare Policy. Finally, we should give some consideration to seeing how child credits integrate with the welfare system. If a nonrefundable tax credit is provided through the tax system, and welfare payments are provided through welfare, then one important group is left out of the calculation—those low-income individuals who neither receive welfare nor pay enough tax to receive the credit. Indirectly, the earned income tax credit might be argued to fill this gap somewhat, but some administrative problems with that credit remain unresolved. An integrated view of welfare, child credits, and earned income tax credits might help us to set up a structure that both reduces some of the perverse incentives of current law and deals more equitably with this group of low-income individuals not on welfare.

Our tax and welfare systems do not merely provide for revenues and expenditures. They reflect the values of our nation. If we wish to place a premium on children, on work, and on formal family ties—and I believe we should—we must change our tax and expenditure systems to reflect these priorities. And a child credit is an appropriate and significant step in that direction.
PUBLIC SPACES

What Makes a Good Urban Park?

PETER KATZ

Everyone has a favorite park, or should. Mine is Washington Square in the heart of San Francisco, bordering the legendary coffee-houses and bookstores of North Beach. First laid out around 1850, the park’s design is mostly open with a simple looping walkway. The subtle ripples and rolls of the park’s topography give me a sense of how the city’s hills and valleys once must have looked. In and around the park, neighborhood life flourishes. Lining its edges are half a dozen restaurants, various offices and townhouses, a church, post office, theater, hotel, bakery, and an Italian social club. Regulars claim sunny benches to read and chat. Elderly Chinese residents practice the graceful movements of Tai Chi. Schoolchildren play frisbee. Commuters disembark from buses which stop alongside the park. Lunchtime picnics are daily events on the sprawling lawn.

Unfortunately, most small urban parks—particularly those in downtowns—fail to deliver the sort of civic experience that can be enjoyed in Washington Square. Such parks are the victims of strapped city budgets, the latest theories on crime prevention, and the nervous tinkering of overzealous designers.

Ultimately, these assaults can be traced back to a larger cause—the disinvestment in cities that resulted from America’s postwar flight to the suburbs. Though the money needed to build and maintain urban parks left town, the people who needed them most remained. By the seventies and eighties, when downtown land values soared along with the gleaming new highrises, it became even harder to realize the idea of a true public realm at the heart of our cities. Many once-proud parks like New York’s Bryant Park and Los Angeles’s Pershing Square fell on hard times. Lack of funds led to lower standards of maintenance and security, which in turn led to crime, drug dealing, and the use of parks as havens by the homeless.
But people’s need for parks didn’t go away. A new form of quasi-public space was invented by the private sector to meet the needs of downtown workers. Generous plazas such as those facing New York’s Park Avenue and Avenue of the Americas were provided by property owners, often in exchange for increased building height. While such spaces provided a dramatic setting for the modernist boxes of corporate America, the experience at ground level was sometimes less than appealing. The combined forces of wind, weather, and the airfoil effect of many of the heroic towers rendered the wide-open spaces below virtually unusable for much of the year.

Enter the atrium as a way to tame the extremes of climate. In cities such as Montreal, Minneapolis, Atlanta, and Houston, an elaborate system of climate-controlled interior courtyards, gardens, lobbies, and passageways enable workers to park, walk to their offices, go to lunch, run errands, and work out at the health club without ever having to set foot on a city street. These not-quite public spaces offer two essential elements that many city parks fail to provide: safety and a clean, well-maintained environment.

But, like the proverbial sidewalks that in many places “roll up at five o’clock,” these private corporate domains shut down not long after the close of business each day, forcing after-hours city dwellers out into the now second-class public realm of the street. Once-vital downtown streets are now largely deserted as restaurants and merchants have moved indoors to capture the lucrative daytime trade.

More troubling than the lack of downtown street life is the erosion of the intimate and longstanding connection between democracy and the public realm. Many popular movements have been played out in the town square—Czechoslovakia’s Velvet Revolution in Wenceslas Square and the student demonstrations in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square. But free speech and soapboxes wouldn’t stand much of a chance in the corporate plazas and shopping malls of today. Uniformed security patrols would likely whisk an offending citizen away long before a sympathetic crowd could ever form. Legal questions about private ownership versus public use have been debated in the highest courts. Special booths for pamphleteers in many airports attest to the awkward compromises resulting from such court decisions.
Even more important than such legal issues are the issues of public versus private “character.” While many of the corporate plazas of the sixties and seventies assumed the function of public parks, albeit poorly, the newest generation of “real” city parks, closely patterned after their corporate predecessors, suffer many of the same shortcomings.

**MAKING A CITY PARK WORK**

What then defines a “good” park, a true urban public place? My own criteria for a successful urban park can be counted on one hand:

* A park should be nearby for everyone. Public open space, such as a square or “commons,” should be at the center of a neighborhood—no more than a five minute walk for most residents. Public buildings, shops (a corner store at minimum), and a transit stop should be part of the center, too. Smaller parks should be scattered throughout the neighborhood so that no one is more than a three-minute walk from a park.

* A public park should look and feel truly public. Being bounded by streets or sidewalks on all sides is one sure way to communicate publicness. The presence of civic buildings and monuments also reinforces this public character. Conversely, spatial relationships get confusing when private houses or buildings back up to a park, without a clear public zone in between. This ambiguous edge fosters conflict between those who live next to the park, and others who come from the surrounding area. A better approach would be for houses to front the park, so that porches, front yards, and streets define the edge between public use and private enjoyment.

* Parks should be simple and not overdesigned. Trees, grass, some walkways, and a bench—these are the basics of my ideal park. Unfortunately, in many new parks it’s hard just to find a clear patch of grass where one can sit in the sun, or a meadow large enough to set up a volleyball net. A park can have a strong identity and implied use—for example, active versus passive recreation—but it should also have enough of the basics to satisfy the needs of a broad range of users.

* A park should retain or enhance the natural contours of the land. In densely settled areas, it’s hard to get a sense of how the terrain looked
before it was built over. I’m particularly aware of this in my own hilly city of San Francisco. I feel that too many new parks, both here and in other cities, are terraced and berm’d beyond recognition. The legendary Olmsteds (whose designs include New York’s Central Park) moved a lot of earth too, but they did so in such a way that the land looked as natural as when they started.

*A good park should allow you to both see and walk through it.* Part of this relates to issues of safety, but this principle also applies to the earlier point about overdesign. In many new parks, I often feel like a victim of planning, forced to navigate an obstacle course just to walk through. By contrast, many older parks offer a simple network of walkways, providing a variety of routes for those who are just passing through. Such fleeting moments in an otherwise hectic day may be the only time that some city dwellers get to experience the pleasures of a park—to smell the flowers, so to speak.

After years of neglect and misdirection, there may at last be some rays of hope for the design of future urban parks. New York’s renovated Bryant Park and Boston’s Post Office Square have been runaway successes among a new generation of parks, largely because their designs respect the basics outlined here. They are effective models that can and should be emulated in other cities. Less successful by my standards are Los Angeles’s redesigned Pershing Square and San Francisco’s new Yerba Buena Gardens. While welcome contributions to the public realm of their respective cities, these parks seem overdesigned and cluttered to the point of dysfunction.

As planners, designers, citizens, and local governments take a renewed interest in public spaces, I offer them all a bit of advice before they get back to their drawing boards: Go out and take a walk in a *good* park. Look at the elements that cause it to work so well. Talk to the people who use it and find out what features they value most. And while you’re there, don’t forget to smell the flowers.
Community-Building Strategies in Smaller Cities: Longview and Tyler, Texas

CAROLE J. HAMNER

Located just 45 miles apart in East Texas, Longview and Tyler have a history of intense rivalry. Discovered about 50 years ago, the East Texas oil fields brought large amounts of wealth to these communities and contributed to a correspondingly hierarchical system of leadership. The oil fields of the region, however, are now long past their peak production, and the area has worked to diversify its economic base and create new employment opportunities for its citizens. The transformation of the economy of the region reflects a similar change in the leadership of the community. The majority of financial institutions, once the primary centers of influence in community leadership, are no longer locally owned. In addition, most of the larger corporations in the area report to headquarters outside of East Texas. Many local managers, therefore, are “just passing through” as part of their career track, and are less likely to become involved in the affairs of the community.

This vacuum in the traditional sources of community leadership, however, has created the opportunity for a more inclusive and representative type of leadership to emerge. Both Longview and Tyler are working to develop new models of leadership that encourage participation from all sectors of the community. As a part of this paradigm shift, the cities are also beginning to work together, to pursue collaboration rather than competition as a means of sustaining the health of the two communities. The Longview/Tyler partnership is developing leadership regionally, by bringing the communities together to discuss issues of common interest, and also locally, at the
neighborhood level, by mobilizing grassroots organizations to make their voices heard. The Longview/Tyler partnership, administered by the New East Texas Foundation, is an ambitious plan to invest in the social capital of the region—to nurture the relationships between neighbors, between citizens and civic institutions, and between the two cities themselves.

**LONGVIEW: CREATING POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS**

The recent changes in Longview’s Stamper Park neighborhood demonstrate how developing a civic infrastructure pays big community dividends. Like many cities, Longview has experienced economic hardship and resulting problems like the breakup of families, illegal drug activity, and increased crime over the past decade. In the early nineties, several organizations directed their efforts to a collaborative project focusing on the citizens in a neighborhood called Stamper Park. The Longview Drug Task Force, a partnership of governmental agencies, private businesses, and nonprofit organizations, joined to mobilize the community around a central tenet of prevention: the need to create positive and caring environments in the families, schools, and workplaces of the community.

The aim of this project is to reduce risk factors for drug abuse while enhancing protective factors by strengthening the bonds between children and families, and between citizens and civic institutions. To accomplish these objectives, the initiative is developing leadership at the grassroots level by designating neighbors as “navigators” to map community needs and capacities, and by working with local organizations to identify priorities for the community.

Stamper Park is a safer and friendlier community than it was a few years ago, residents insist. Jerry Stanmore, president of the Stamper Park Neighborhood Association, admits:

There used to be a lot of problems with drugs, and there still is some drug activity, but it’s not as bad as it was. The people have come together through our partnerships and know one another now. Before, I hardly knew the person who lives across the street from me. Now he’s one of my best friends—baby-sits my kid sometimes. This happened throughout the neighborhood; and now I can walk down the street and people know me.
Mr. Stanmore’s remarks attest to the fact that investing in social capital—building relationships in the community between neighbors and between citizens and civic institutions—is the first step toward neighborhood revitalization.

An integral part of the Stamper Park revitalization effort has been the community policing initiative started by the City of Longview. Rather than intervening only in crisis situations, community police officers work with neighborhoods in an ongoing process to prevent crime and improve public safety. Officer Mike Bishop explains the difference between traditional police work and community policing. Discussing how police strategies have changed over the past two years, he says:

[Before the community policing initiative], we all got in our patrol cars and started answering calls; and our objective was to start the shift and answer our calls, end the shift, and go home. Whereas now we are doing more proactive activities—going into drug-infested areas and talking to the owners of the properties and saying, “Listen, there is drug dealing going on here and we are going to do something about it.”

The community police officers emphasize that their effectiveness depends on their relationship with residents of the neighborhood. They act as liaisons to help law enforcement respond to the needs identified by the neighborhood.

B. J. Sentell, supervisor of the Harvey-Johnson Community Center in South Longview, has worked closely with community police officer Cliff Carruth to make her community safer. She explains:

I, purposefully, recently moved to an area where I knew there was a lot of crime and drug activity. I appreciate the people in the community who are coming forth to say that we want a change. And it takes that type of boldness, and not walking in fear.

Ms. Sentell relocated to a home between two drug dealers. “When I first moved in, there was a deal going down every five minutes,” she said. Since moving in a few months ago, she has worked with Officer Carruth and other residents to improve the situation. While many of her neighbors were fearful, others were willing to address the problem. Ms. Sentell says, “I am very thankful that some
of the citizens are involved. It cannot be done by one person. It takes a community effort.”

While reaching out to involve the community as a whole in their partnership, the residents of Stamper Park feel that it is important to retain ownership of their initiative. A longtime resident of the community, Lou Ella Block explains how the neighborhood partnership began:

We focused on what we really wanted to do; and then when we went to people for help, we told them exactly what we wanted, and we didn’t ask them to do our job for us. We asked them to help us learn how to do the things that we want to do. We’ve got the drive. We’ve got the will. We were just lacking the experience and education in certain fields...It might take two or three years to get to the point. It might take longer. But I’m looking forward to seeing a whole lot of change around here.

The Stamper Park Neighborhood Partnership is serving as a model for other neighborhood organizations in Longview and East Texas. This initiative demonstrates that changing relationships in the community—between neighbors, between residents and law enforcement officials, and between citizens and city hall—change communities. Longview has launched a comprehensive effort to sustain the health and well-being of its neighborhoods. When asked what strategy is central to the success of the project, Ms. Sentell replies:

Making the citizens in the neighborhood feel that they are a part of the change is very important. It is not about knowing it all. I mean, we don’t know it all. We really must work together; and I positively feel everybody has something to contribute; and that’s why the grassroots level is so important. That’s where you talk to people who have been concerned for a long time—and they need this opportunity to be able to go forth and share their concerns and to be welcome at the table.

**TYLER: BUILDING AND USING SOCIAL CAPITAL**

“I’m looking for angry people,” says Eloisa Aparicio, a neighborhood coordinator in Tyler, Texas. Anger is energy, she asserts, and can be tapped to supply the momentum for beginning a process of
civic renewal. Ms. Aparicio is coordinating the neighborhood “navigator” component of Tyler’s neighborhood revitalization initiative.

Like their counterparts in Longview, these navigators will act as liaisons between low-income, predominantly minority neighborhoods and civic institutions in Tyler. The isolation many culturally diverse neighborhoods feel from the larger community is a challenge facing any process of urban reinvestment. Ms. Aparicio explains, for example, why recent Hispanic immigrants are not taking advantage of the Spanish language programs at the Tyler library. Most of these individuals did not have access to libraries or books in their communities in Mexico and so are unfamiliar with the resources and procedures of American libraries. An analogous situation exists with newcomers to the United States who are unfamiliar with the institutions of democracy, and the way one gains a voice in issues of concern to one’s community. Ms. Aparicio asserts that education for citizenship is an integral part of ending the isolation of minority communities and increasing opportunity for all citizens.

In reference to Ms. Aparicio’s work in neighborhoods, Nancy Lamar, executive director of People Attempting To Help (PATH), explains, “We’ve been out in the neighborhoods already, talk, talk, talking. It is difficult for some people to understand that for the next few months, the most important thing we are going to do is to talk with residents. We are not going to have a building to show for it—what we’ll have to show for it is relationships.”

Developing this civic infrastructure is the first step in identifying a problem and taking action. Both Longview and Tyler are building on existing efforts in the community. In Tyler, Reverend Wesley Moore, pastor of the Northside Christian Church, has been instrumental in numerous grassroots projects, including the organization of the St. Louis neighborhood in South Tyler to respond to needs in the community. Reverend Moore stresses the importance of giving the community ownership of its initiatives:

When people find out that they can do something, we do it. We don’t have to ask the city to do it. We don’t have to ask the police to do it. We don’t have to have a lot of money to do it. All we have to do is decide what direction to take and to pursue it. When you get that kind of energy going in the community, then things begin to happen.
Mr. Ernest Deckert, a longtime resident of Tyler and president of the city’s NAACP chapter, has been active in a project to develop affordable housing and encourage home ownership in his neighborhood in North Tyler. PATH recently acquired 27 housing units to renovate and make available to low-income individuals and families. Mr. Deckert was actually one of the original residents in this development when it was completed in the 1960s. He lived there for about three years before moving down the street to another home in the neighborhood where he still lives. Mr. Deckert underscores the fact that creating affordable housing is only one facet of building a community. The families moving into these renovated units, he realizes, may need assistance with budgeting and other skills development:

This is a great learning process for individuals that shows how important it is to plan for the future events that are going to happen in your life. Many people get up in the morning and take life for granted and never look at tomorrow. We should all have a vision of life. I think this project will help us educate people—let them look at their own growth, at what makes them important, at what makes them proud and part of the community.

Mr. Deckert believes that his community has a rich history and a lot to be proud of. Curtis Humphry’s photography studio, for example, has documented the past 50 years of the African-American experience in the city; for a half-century, Mr. Humphry has recorded the weddings, the baptisms, the funerals—the thread of events shaping the lives of African-Americans in Tyler. Texas College, a historically black institution, just celebrated its 125th anniversary of providing opportunity and education to the community; and the Alfredo Hotel, though now run-down, once was a regular stop for popular musicians like B.B. King.

The rich history Mr. Deckert and other longtime residents of Tyler recall underscores another important aspect of civic renewal—preserving an identity of a place and nurturing pride in a common history. Developing an appreciation of a shared culture goes hand in hand with invigorating a spirit of community.

The community partners in Tyler are excited about the potential of their neighborhoods and also realistic about the process of change.
As Ms. Aparicio asserts:

A lot of these people, all they have heard all their lives are negative things. They’ve never had anybody to be behind them, and push them in the right direction. And the further down they go, they say “I can’t do this. I can’t do anything.” I think when you are working with people like that, it’s going to take a lot of time. After 20 or 30 years of being told you can’t do it, it’s going to take a while to show them what they can do.

THE LESSONS OF LOCAL ACTION

Neighborhoods are where we come home to. Ideally they exude a sense of security, of familiarity, of belonging. Throughout much of the nation’s history, however, the level of comfort in the communities we came home to has been calculated by the extent to which our neighbors resembled each other and ourselves. We now have the opportunity to revise our notion of belonging—to “come home” to the changing face of our neighborhoods and to the potential that all citizens have to contribute to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of their communities. A number of lessons emerge from a closer look at initiatives developing the wide-ranging capacities of neighborhoods:

- Investing in the social infrastructure of a community, by building relationships between individuals and between organizations, lays the foundation for neighborhood renewal.
- By developing political skills and learning how to deliberate, to negotiate, and to compromise, citizens can have a voice in the larger community.
- Issues demanding immediate attention, such as affordable housing and crime prevention, create the opportunity for people to mobilize themselves to effect systemic change in the institutions of the community.
- Communities have both institutional assets, like churches and businesses, and intangible assets, like culture and family, that can be tapped to fuel the processes of civic renewal.

In cities across the country partnerships are forming—between governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations, between na-
tional and local philanthropies, and between grassroots and traditional leadership. Such cooperation will be needed to address the immediate needs of individuals and respond to the systemic problems of communities.
FROM SELFISHNESS TO COMPASSION

Robert Wright, *The Moral Animal*

Reviewed by Tim Beardsley

“Know thyself” is the famous advice of the oracle at Delphi; but as the disorienting philosophical impact of natural selection has spread, we have not much felt like knowing ourselves, being fearful of what we might discover. Despite some skirmishes on the fringes, there has been no serious challenge to modern evolutionary theory, and books such as Richard Dawkins’s *The Selfish Gene* have impressed into the public mind life’s unthinking dance to the music of DNA. Dawkins and others of a sociobiological cast of mind have taken care to point out that if their doctrine seems to justify callous exploitation, it should not: humans, alone in the animal kingdom, can choose to fight the horrors of nature’s way rather than perpetuate them. Nonetheless, the Darwinian revolution has often seemed a depressing one. The ancient and powerful legacy of genes seems to leave little room for our nobler sentiments.

Robert Wright is fully aware of how far the maligned influence of genes extends into our lives and our innermost thoughts. He accepts that people are “basically selfish.” Dismissing the notion that Darwinian insights have little relevance to modern society, he pursues natural selection’s often unpalatable effect on our minds to its logical conclusion. “I think we are more in danger of underestimating the enemy than overestimating it,” Wright explains. Yet his analysis succeeds in steering well clear of the intellectually and morally bankrupt notions of social Darwinism and its converse, behaviorism. And it is in a curious way inspiring, because by highlighting *Homo sapiens*’s most wicked inclinations it shows how some of them might be tamed.
The Moral Animal first follows DNA’s trail of blood and tears to the battle of the sexes. Wright’s provocative survey of findings from “evolutionary psychology” on sex and marriage would itself be enough for a remarkable book. Wright picks up where Robert Trivers, the inventor of an important concept known as parental investment, left off. Trivers drew attention to the fact that the cost of a single act of procreation, in terms of diminished expectations for future reproduction, is in most animals much smaller for males than it is for females. That difference seems to explain why it is usually males who compete for females, and not vice versa. Wright uses this idea to conduct an audit of public and private sexual morality. He visits Victorian England (where Charles and Emma Darwin are the prize exhibits) as well as the contemporary United States, stopping on the way to look at Margaret Mead’s mistaken conclusions about coming of age in Samoa.

Today’s enlightened times don’t seem so enlightened through the lens of evolutionary psychology. In the United States, at least, men still often see women as madonnas or whores, and serial polygyny is the order of the day. “We have to ask not whether monogamy can be saved, but whether it can be restored. And we might be enthusiastically joined in this inquiry not only by discontented wifeless men, but by a large number of discontented former wives—especially the ones who had the bad fortune to marry someone less wealthy than Johnny Carson.”

Wright does not shrink from moralizing. A moral code is “an informal compromise among competing spheres of genetic self-interest.” His thinking leads in some unexpected directions. There is “a virtual genetic conspiracy to depict sexually loose women as evil,” since parents of pretty girls as well as happily married women perceive an atmosphere of promiscuity as inimical to their interests, while men shun women who are too readily available as marriage partners. Yet “if you believe, as most people seem to, that it is immoral to cause others pain by implicitly or explicitly misleading them, you might be more inclined to condemn the sexual looseness of men than of women.”

From the agonies of relations between the sexes Wright turns to the even bigger private agonies of a troubled conscience. Friends and
family have different claims on us: brotherly love, although far from unconditional, is the more genuine of the two, being firmly buttressed by kin selection. That principle, formalized by William Hamilton in the 1960s, posits that natural selection should favor genes that predispose their owners to be more self-sacrificing toward relatives than toward others, because relatives are more likely to carry similar genes. People certainly seem to behave roughly in accordance with the predictions of the theory, and it accounts well for some paradoxes of animal behavior. A different kind of social cement, that of reciprocal altruism, can be simply summed up as “You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours.” Reciprocal altruism appears to oblige us to be helpful, or at least fair, to our friends as well as our kin. But this obligation is actually a lesser one: it is merely to give the appearance of having helped. And so we tirelessly strive to present ourselves as epitomes of decency, and our consciences make sure we stick to the story—at least enough to preserve our image. “Is there a single culture in which neglecting a friend is a guiltless and widely approved behavior?” Wright demands.

Seeking social status—a proxy for control over physical resources and sexual opportunity—is one of the games people play almost everywhere. Not everyone consciously indulges in social climbing, but a thirst for approval appears early in life. We like to leave a good impression, so much so that “we deceive ourselves in order to deceive others better.” That startling idea was first aired by Trivers and Richard Alexander in the seventies, but Wright grabs it and runs. “It goes without saying that the fish got away through no fault of the fisherman’s. The assignment of blame and of credit, an area where objective truth is elusive, offers rich terrain for self-inflation.”

Enmity is reciprocal altruism’s enforcer, and many of us today try to express loathing (always deserved, naturally) verbally rather than physically. “The best way to be convincing when saying bad things about people is to believe the insults,” Wright suggests. Darwin, whose diaries provide fertile ground for explorations of a male primate’s mental processes, made a highly relevant observation: “[F]ew individuals...can long reflect about a hated person, without feeling and exhibiting signs of indignation or rage.” When we argue, we are convinced of our exact rightness—and then we make a
concession to our opponent. This “flexible firmness” may be an evolutionarily advantageous strategy, Wright speculates: “The proposition here is that the human brain is, in large part, a machine for winning arguments, a machine for convincing others that its owner is right—and thus a machine for convincing its owner of the same thing.”

Where does all this leave the nobler sentiments? Not where you might think. Far from being a counsel of despair, Wright’s book recognizes at each turn the malleability of the mind. “Some drives and emotions—say, lust and jealousy—may never be wholly erasable.” But on the other hand, our “more egregious tendencies can be greatly, if arduously, subdued.” We may indeed all crave social status, but we can be persuaded to accept different tokens of that status. Darwinism does not put insurmountable obstacles in the way of improving society.

Which way would most people want? Not one to duck a challenge, Wright produces a formula: that of John Stuart Mill’s utilitarianism, which seeks the greatest happiness of the greatest number. It’s unquestionably fair, he argues, and only a few “die-hard nihilists” who deny that there’s anything good about happiness are likely to object. This sounds like the way to unprincipled hedonism, but it isn’t. The utilitarian advantages of cooperation with our fellow human beings far outweigh the disadvantages of becoming known as a cheat and a turncoat, so it’s very much in our interest to join the morality club. But the very last place we should look for guidance on morality is our instincts, fashioned as they are to delude us with feelings of righteous indignation and lust for retribution, not to mention everyday garden-variety lust.

Pursuing morality with the more objective guide of the utilitarian calculus leads to a surprising result: “You should, in short, go through life considering the welfare of everyone else exactly as important as your own welfare.” To the religious, that might have a familiar ring, but Wright is as skeptical about religion as he is about human nature. He is a determinist: We are determined jointly by our genes and our environment, and free will is an illusion. This line of thinking leads quickly to an engaging perspective on criminal justice: Blame is an intellectually vacuous (although practically necessary) concept. “I do
believe," Wright concludes, "that most people who clearly understand the new Darwinian paradigm and earnestly ponder it will be led toward greater compassion and concern for their fellow human beings."

This journey from selfishness to compassion makes *The Moral Animal* more than just a well-written book about a fascinating, if immature, science. It is an important defense against the charge by religious and political zealots that Darwinism is somehow immoral. For that reason if for no other, biologists would do well to be aware of it. Fundamentalism is on the rise in the United States and around the world, and Darwin’s ideas have never been popular in such circles. Efforts to suppress the teaching of evolution have gained strength in the past couple of years. The next couple of years could see severe budget cuts imposed on biological research by its ideological opponents. Now is not the time to be complacent about science’s hallowed place in society.

Scientists would be foolish to ignore *The Moral Animal* because it was not written by one of their own clan. Wright, a senior editor at *The New Republic*, understands evolution better than many biologists. It is a sad reflection on society that in the months since *The Moral Animal* was published most of the ink spilled over genes and human behavior has focused on *The Bell Curve*. *The Moral Animal* is admittedly speculative in places, but that speculation is intelligent and careful.

Parts of Wright’s book can be criticized as overplaying the precision of the genetic machinery that pulls our strings. Wright’s struggle to account for homosexuality, for example, whereby a substantial minority of the population forgoes any prospect of getting its genes into the next generation, is less than entirely convincing. His preferred explanation cites the impressive malleability of the mind; but malleability in that degree is not easily reconciled with the sort of fine-grained examination of behavior Wright offers in his dissection of the evolutionary logic behind Darwin’s decision to marry. The ideas in the first half of the book are explored patiently, but in the final chapters the pace picks up to that of a whirlwind that might leave any reader gasping for air.

The author’s deductions about morality place him politically neither on the left nor the right. There is a conservative flavor to some
of his ideas about sex, but Wright’s views on social issues are distinctly unconservative. The lack of an obvious political constituency may be part of the reason why, despite favorable reviews, Wright’s book has not captured as much attention as it deserves. *The Moral Animal* should sit well with communitarians because the book’s essentially biological analysis parallels the moral viewpoint of communitarian thought. Both see as vital the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the community. Because humans evolved in communities, it is not unreasonable to think we might function best in communities.

Wright’s book is not the first to set the ideas of evolutionary psychology before a public audience. But the breadth of its scope and the sharpness of its insights make it the most impressive attempt yet to reconcile Darwinism with hopes for a more humane world.

Targeting an audience of school faculty and administrators, Schulman provides a guide to developing moral education programs in schools. The book covers many facets of the school community, from school governance to curriculum to athletics. Focusing on the practical application of moral education, Schulman gives answers to questions such as “Whose morality should be taught?” He also provides a framework for how to structure a workshop on moral education.


This journal, which is targeted at providing the preaching clergy with a resource to produce inspirational sermons, has dedicated an issue to the subject of community. Sections include thoughts from theologians, scholars, and writers; quotations from the scriptures; and ideas for preaching on the subject of community.


Self-help organizations play an important role in the field of medicine. Instead of focusing on the diseases and afflictions of individuals, Riessman and Carroll point to the millions of people who are members of these organizations as resources for helping others to combat illness and problems. Using examples from hundreds of self-help organizations across the country, the book describes the purpose of self-help organizations, their relationships to other resources and service-delivery systems, their strengths and difficulties as a tool for improvement, and the place of self-help organizations in the broader context of social change.

Divorce as a vehicle for greater adult happiness has failed, according to this paper. Society needs to focus on marriage as a necessary aspect of our communities. The Council on Families calls for a change in cultural values and public policy for this to be accomplished.


This issue is devoted to examining the place of community in the world today. Topics covered include: issues of intercultural relations; the importance of the public interest and values in society; the need for community collaboration; the need to integrate national policy and local community efforts; and the implications that the information superhighway could have on community building.


Proctor provides an examination of the world of cancer research, from the possible causes of cancer to the political battles it fosters. He gives the reader insight into how interest groups can use and abuse the goals and objectives of research for financial, ideological, and moral purposes—and how billions of dollars and prestige are at stake as scientists search for a cure.
Morality and Needle Exchange: A Debate

DOING THE DEVIL’S WORK

Politicians, public health advocates, and AIDS activists have unleashed a new weapon in the war on HIV: needle exchange programs (NEPs). At last count, proponents had succeeded in overcoming intense opposition from some religious leaders, black leaders, and drug treatment providers to convince 20 major U.S. cities—from Seattle to Boston—to open publicly-funded needle exchanges. The programs, which provide drug addicts with clean needles in the hopes that addicts will refrain from using ones tainted by the deadly virus, are supposed to save thousands of lives by reducing the spread of AIDS among the group that is now experiencing the biggest increase in HIV infection: intravenous drug users, their sexual partners, and their children.

Even if NEPs do save thousands of lives in the short term, they amount to a morally and socially unacceptable accommodation to drug use. By providing addicts with the instruments of their addiction, NEPs implicate communities in a pathology that destroys addicts and those with whom they live and (sometimes) work. By acquiescing to the inevitability of drug use, NEPs also reduce the effectiveness of social and legal prohibitions against drugs and contribute to a climate of moral indifference. NEPs cannot be judged simply for their impact on public health. They must also be judged by how they affect the public’s moral and spiritual well-being.

The apostles of accommodation see no higher good than saving addicts’ lives—regardless of the means by which those lives are saved. However, the religious and moral traditions of many Ameri-
cans suggest that some acts cannot be condoned—no matter how desirable the consequences—because they are intrinsically evil. The question then becomes not whether NEPs are effective, but whether they amount to an accommodation of the evil of drug abuse.

Drug use is a pathological behavior that saps the will and independence of the addict and wreaks havoc on the communities in which addicts live. As Judge Reggie Walton of the Washington, D.C. Superior Court has said, drug use often ends in “child abuse, murder, and the deterioration of community.” Too often, our society offers aid and comfort indiscriminate of right behavior. But if we aim to maintain a vital moral climate, we must actively discourage immorality. Communities have a clear responsibility to stand in solidarity with those who have made the right decision—the many men, women, and children who have had the courage to resist drug use in the first place or to confront their addictions and seek treatment. We only silence the moral voice of the community by distributing syringes to addicts.

This is not to say we should abandon them. Leaving addicts to their fate would be just as callous as providing them with the instruments of their addiction. Addicts deserve a measure of our sympathy, but true sympathy means confronting them in a spirit of tough love with the requirement of treatment. True sympathy also means coming up with the necessary treatment dollars.

There are those who would suggest that these are simply moral objections to needle exchange and, as such, amount to little consequence for the world we all inhabit. But the moral decisions we make as a community effect our common life together. The social implication of NEPs is that drug use will continue apace and might even rise. Proponents, pointing to the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) finding that NEPs have not been clearly linked to increases in drug use, dispute this. The CDC, however, did not rely on any sophisticated methodological survey of drug use; it looked only at rough indicators of drug use immediately following the introduction of NEPs in six U.S. cities. Changes in a community’s moral climate inevitably take some time to filter into its social life, and therefore have a complicated relationship to behavior. NEPs, should they become fixtures in urban America, will undercut in three ways our
ability to instill the kind of fear necessary to get addicts into treatment and keep others off drugs.

First, NEPs will give addicts and potential addicts a sense of physical security about drug use. In the view of the late Richard Herrnstein, a psychiatrist at Harvard University, “Needle exchange undermines the one thing restraining addiction: fear [of AIDS].” Without the fear of AIDS hanging over them, many addicts will avoid confronting the difficult decision they must make to stop shooting up.

Second, needle exchanges also provide public health officials with a sense of security about AIDS that will lead them to forget the drug abuse that causes needle-borne AIDS transmission in the first place. While most NEPs make some effort to refer their clients to treatment, others have an institutional logic that aims merely to sanitize drug use rather than to stop it. For example, Pat Christen, director of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, told the CDC that needle exchange “should never ever be linked to a demand to go into treatment, that [treatment] should be just an option that is presented and that it should be presented in the most neutral, nonjudgmental fashion possible. And it should be very clear to the [users] that if they never go into treatment they will still have access to the [needle exchange]..., that they are really important in our community, and we want them alive and, well, healthy.”

Third, NEPs create a climate of complacency in which the public and its leaders can avoid the difficult choices and expenditures required to get a handle on drug pathologies. This course has met with devastating results in countries such as Switzerland and Italy, where authorities have made drug use easier and safer for their citizens and then watched drug use explode. As the Reverend Graylan Ellis-Hagler, who changed his position on NEPs after being implored to do so by ex-addicts in Boston, argues, “Needle exchange is a dodge from the real issue: getting more drug treatment.”

Addicts need to be picked up off the streets and confronted with the stark alternative of jail or treatment. In turn, cities and charitable institutions have a responsibility to make sure such treatment is available. But zero tolerance for drug abuse must continue to be our credo, even as we move to meet the spiritual, social, economic, and treatment needs of city residents. As Reverend Ellis-Hagler reminds
us, “The true formula for liberation is getting clean and liberating one’s community from the ball and chain of addiction.”

W. Bradford Wilcox

A “MORAL” MESSAGE WITH A HIGH PRICE TAG

On the basis of numbers alone, the argument for NEPs is painfully evident. Contaminated needles are increasingly becoming the most common means of spreading AIDS, now accounting for one in every three new cases of HIV infection. Furthermore, intravenous drug users are now the fastest growing at-risk group. Studies by the federal government confirm that NEPs have significantly curbed the spread of AIDS and have averted millions of dollars in healthcare expenditures.

Yet the argument for implementing NEPs is based on more than sheer pragmatism. In the face of an escalating health tragedy which officials can alleviate with existing technology, inaction is irresponsible and callous. Accepting the argument that drug addicts’ behavior excuses us from acting on their behalf would set the dangerous precedent that our society considers some human lives less precious than hollow moralizing.

Opponents of NEPs object on the grounds that such programs do not adequately discourage drug use, and in fact may even encourage it. They portray AIDS prevention and anti-drug efforts as mutually exclusive goals. Bob Martinez, former director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, said in a 1992 report, “[We cannot] allow our concern for AIDS to undermine our determination to win the war on drugs.” However, numerous studies have shown that NEPs do not increase the frequency of drug use by those who are already addicted, nor do they attract new users.

On the contrary, NEPs have helped ease drug addiction by acting as effective recruitment sites for drug treatment programs. According to a New Haven, Connecticut study, one in four NEP participants
signed up for drug treatment. Four exchanges in New York City referred nearly 500 addicts to treatment programs within the first four months of operation alone. As AIDS activist A. Billy S. Jones says, “A clean needle has never made anybody start or stop drugs, but it will slow down the virus out there.” The argument that NEPs encourage drug use is simply not borne out by addicts’ behavior.

Opposition to NEPs is frequently based on the idea that these programs are sending the wrong moral message by condoning drug use and making it safer. Opponents argue that the state should not act to curb AIDS if it means supplying addicts the tools of their addiction. However, society’s message in implementing NEPs is not one of sanctioning drug use but rather one of warning and responsibility: We’d rather you not use drugs, but if you do, at least don’t contribute to the spread of AIDS.

NEPs do not signal a surrender to drug addiction, but rather a recognition of it as a pathology that can only be broken by an addict’s decision to seek treatment, not by threats of incarceration or of HIV infection. The drug epidemic continues unabated despite addicts’ knowledge of such risks. While we cannot hope for success at completely eliminating drug addiction, we can help halt the spread of AIDS among addicts and their sexual partners and children, buying more time for them to decide to end their habit.

It has also been argued that NEPs treat the symptom, rather than addressing the root problem: drug addiction. Resources expended on NEPs, opponents say, would be better spent on drug treatment programs. This is a disingenuous argument; the message sent by federal policy on drug abuse is wholly unequivocal—heavy-handed with the stick and sparing with the carrot.

Currently 70 percent of our federal anti-drug spending is devoted to law enforcement and interdiction and only 30 percent to treatment and prevention programs. Law enforcement regarding drug use has never been stricter, yet our cities and states are lagging in providing the social services that can eliminate and prevent drug addiction. For example, in New York State alone, there are an estimated 500,000 drug addicts, but space for only 43,000 of them in drug treatment facilities. Until the United States recognizes that drug abuse is a scourge that can only be overcome through adequate social services
as well as strict penalties, we will continue to see an explosion of both drug use and its partner, HIV infection. And until that recognition comes, NEPs will remain the most ethically acceptable means of detaching the two problems to the greatest possible extent.

It is bitterly ironic that those who would exacerbate AIDS’s toll on our society should cloak themselves behind a veil of morality. At best, such pandering to empty symbolism is simply misguided. At worst, NEP opponents would treat a whole segment of society as expendable. A society that would not take measures to curb the AIDS epidemic because fear of AIDS might discourage drug use is a society with its moral priorities all wrong.

Sarah Horton

MAJOR STUDIES:


School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley; Institute for Health Policy Studies, University of California, San Francisco. The Public Health Impact of Needle Exchange Programs in the United States and Abroad (Rockville, MD: Center for Disease Control, 1993).


The following are excerpts of speeches from 1995 communitarian events. President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of Education William Bennett spoke at the Second Annual White House Conference on Character Building, organized by The Communitarian Network. Reverend Jesse Jackson spoke to a panel on affirmative action at The Communitarian Network’s Second Annual Meeting.

**PRESIDENT CLINTON:**

If you want to be an elected official in a democracy you must, first of all, get people to identify with you more than your opponent. And you must say, “Here are the differences between us, and here’s what I stand for; here are the choices we face and here are the decisions I would make; and here is why I would make those decisions.” So in that sense, conflict and difference and dividing up the electorate are the essence of politics. But there is a big difference between division and difference of opinion, and destruction and demonization. And there is a big difference between difference and dehumanization....It is a new challenge to figure out how we all work together and still leave room for our differences.

* * *

The fundamental insight that I have gotten from Dr. Etzioni is that we have to build networks. And this, as you know, is the second conference on character building we’ve had where we’ve welcomed people to the White House. I would very much like to see this institutionalized as an annual event that goes way beyond my administration; that encompasses Republicans and Democrats and that has nothing to do with politics. Indeed, I think we should view this effort in our country not as bipartisan, but as nonpartisan. And we need to think about ways that we can continue to build networks that work together for a generation. Because a lot of our problems were a generation in coming and they’re going to be a generation in going.
DR. BENNETT:

Mary Warnock, the great philosopher from Cambridge, says that for the young to learn about morality, for the young to learn about morality so that it becomes part of their lives, they must be in the presence of people who take morality seriously. And the young must see those people taking morality seriously. In my own view, it is best if the young see those people taking morality seriously in their own relationships with those very people: their children or their students or their apprentices. Children, I think, need this above all.

It is an irreducible fact—it is a fact of life—that the kind of people children grow up around will determine, I believe more than anything else, the kind of people they will become...For the most part, what we do to children, they will do to others. There is nothing like the moral power of example.

REVEREND JACKSON:

For as long as we had been here, blacks could not own property, which in effect gave whites a 250 year advantage. And those who got oil-rich land, or were given land for other people to work, passed that land down to their children, and their children’s children. This gave them substantial advantages, while it was illegal for others to compete. And by and large that wealth has come not through taking tests at universities, but through inheritance, and the grandfathering of wealth.

Historians tend not to want to write about this period. They call it the Nadir—the Dark Period. But consider the issue of “family values.” It was illegal for blacks to marry. It was illegal for African children to be named after their fathers. The family was illegal. Not only could the parents not marry as man and woman, but the man could not give the children his name.
From the Libertarian Side

Collateral Damage?

The support for self-help does not seem strong enough to stop those who oppose almost any role for government. During the current legislative session, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to eliminate $124 million of fiscal year 1995 funding for community development financial institutions (CDFIs).

CDFIs provide loans to high-risk individuals and businesses, to whom traditional commercial banks are unwilling or unable to lend. Self-Help, a CDFI in Durham, NC, makes its loans at market interest rates, and has defaults on par with the rest of the financial services industry. The goal of many CDFIs, like Chicago’s famous South Shore Bank, is home and business ownership by those previously unable to secure credit.

Willie Patterson, a resident of Durham’s Crest Street community, credits Self-Help with saving his neighborhood: “I don’t know how to describe Self-Help’s value—it’s just limitless.” But the House thought differently. Although a bipartisan coalition in the Senate is seeking to restore a quarter of the funding, that effort faces an uncertain future.

U.S. News & World Report, 17 April 1995
Mother Knows Best

In 1993 at the prompting of the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy (an offshoot of the American Civil Liberties Union), the federal government effectively terminated a “crack-baby” prevention program at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) by threatening to withhold all federal funding from the hospital if it continued the program. The government claimed that the program violated the privacy rights of the cocaine-using mothers.

The program was designed by social workers, drug-rehabilitation specialists, hospital officials, and local law-enforcement officials. It grew out of a concern for the children of the 24 pregnant women per month who tested positive for cocaine at the hospital. Public service announcements notified people of the program, which was being done only at MUSC. Women who voluntarily chose MUSC were counseled about the consequences of a positive test and signed consent forms. If a woman tested positive, she was advised of the adverse effects of cocaine on unborn children and offered a choice: either she would have to complete a drug-rehabilitation program or she would be charged with felony use of cocaine.

The efforts to protect unborn children brought a host of objections. The American Medical Association and the American Pediatrics Association passed resolutions denouncing the program. The National Institutes of Health asserted that the hospital was conducting experiments on pregnant women. In 1993 the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy filed a civil suit alleging discrimination, a suit which it lost because a judge decided that no basis for the claim of discrimination existed. However, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sent ethics and civil rights investigators to Charleston and issued the final ultimatum—the federal government would withhold all funding for all MUSC programs unless it ended the “crack-baby” prevention program.

Although the healthcare cost for a “crack baby” averages $750,000, MUSC could not survive without federal funding, so to save the community from the hospital closure, MUSC ended the program.

Policy Review, Spring 1995
Hear No Evil

On May 26, 1995, citing government infringement and the stifling of domestic dissent, civil libertarian Democrat senators voted with Republicans to kill an amendment to the new counterterrorism legislation that would have allowed the government to establish “domestic or international terrorism” as another circumstance under which the Justice Department could tap phones before obtaining a warrant. During the following 48 hours a court order would have to be obtained to use any of the materials garnered from the wiretap in later court proceedings.

There was also opposition to a second measure that ultimately was adopted by the Senate. The legislation would expand government powers to tap all phones used by a suspect. Such “roving” wiretaps would allow the authorities to list a person, rather than a particular phone line, in a warrant for a tap. In this way the authorities would be able to use evidence from conversations of suspects regardless of the phone they use. So, switching from a home phone to a cellular phone to a pay phone would no longer be a way for suspects to insulate themselves from wiretaps.

The Washington Post, 27 May 1995

From the Authoritarian Side

Et Tu, ACLU?

On April 30, 1995, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) suspended Alan Bell, a longtime ACLU member.

Bell, an “obnoxious jerk” by his own admission, believes that the New Jersey chapter of the ACLU wants to get rid of him because of his outspoken criticism of its financial management. In 1994 the New Jersey chapter held a referendum to limit non-boardmember speeches at business meetings, an action that Bell said was aimed at silencing him. So as an act of protest, he stuffed the ballot box in, he claims, an “obvious and transparent way.”
The ACLU contends that it was just this action that required disciplinary action against Bell. Legal director Marsha Wenk cited the ballot-stuffing incident when she said, “There’s nothing more serious you can do to an organization than undermine its democratic process.” But according to Bell, it is not he who is undemocratic. “For the ACLU to throw out a dissident is fairly remarkable. It’s the ultimate man-bites-dog story.”

The New York Times, 27 April, 1 May 1995

From the Community at Large

Collecting from Deadbeats

Deadbeat dads (and moms, about 5 percent of deadbeats) beat the system of child-support collection by moving, playing legal games, and slipping through the cracks of overburdened government agencies. But no more. A new group of start-up businesses, similar to private collection firms, takes some of the load off government by tracking down deadbeats and making them pay up.

By combining traditional investigative techniques with new legislation, 150 companies dedicated to collecting child support go after individuals who, as a group, owe 17 million children $34 billion. Once a deadbeat is located the real collection work begins. Using court orders these companies can garnish wages and attach bank accounts, and may even foreclose on real estate. Some shame their target by posting notices in the deadbeat’s community. New legislation may allow them to get the deadbeats’ driver’s and professional licenses revoked.

Casey Hoffman, a former Texas official in the office of child-support collections, left his job for the private sector. “At some point I realized that the private sector was going to have to come into play.” It has come into play significantly. His company employs eight full-time investigators and currently has a caseload of 3,000. Private firms, like Hoffman’s, have a greater than 60 percent recovery rate.
As with all private sector work, there is a price to pay. Most of these companies work on a contingency of about 30 percent of recovered monies. Some in the public sector characterize the private firms as a bunch of “vultures” and argue that if one can afford to pay 30 percent of child support payments one should hire a lawyer, who operates under more stringent regulations. But JoAnn Anderson used a private firm, now receives $1,600 in monthly payments, and has no regrets. “I don’t mind paying their fee. I am certain Minnesota [her home state] would never have gotten him to pay anything.”

Time, 3 April 1995

The Costs of Cutting

Truancy’s cost used to be less education for the truant; now, in Monrovia, CA, the cost is more real. Since October, 1994, police officers have been enforcing an antiloitering law that prohibits students from being away from school between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. without the necessary pass. The penalty, meted out at a court appearance which a parent or guardian must attend, is a $135 fine or 25 hours of community service. This is the first punishment of its kind in the nation.

Police Chief Joseph A. Santoro believes, “With that ticket in their hand, truants immediately see the consequences of ditching school.” With an eye toward deterring delinquency later in life, the law attempts to increase attendance, reduce daytime crime, and improve grades. Students are taking note. “This new law isn’t just a slap on the hand. You can’t just smile it off—you have to pay,” declares Phoebe Terrill, a 17-year-old senior.

The ACLU opposes the new approach. Silvia Argueta, an ACLU lawyer, states, “You have law enforcement stopping anyone who they believe is a student. There are already truancy and compulsory education laws. If they were adequately enforced, you could get rid of the problem.”

The New York Times, 10 May 1995
Beyond the Pale

A Joke No More

The American Freedom Network of Canton, Michigan, expresses its fear of the “developing police state” in the United States in a brochure titled, “You May Not Have a Country After 1995!” Among their claims:

- There are four massive completed crematoriums and 130 concentration camps in America at which over two million citizens are slated for “detention” and “liquidation.”
- The 200 million guns possessed by citizens are the greatest deterrent to the New World Order.
- Secret societies like the Illuminati—“a secret society that has secretly taken over another secret society, the Freemasons [among which President Clinton is one]”—rule the nation.
- Presidential Executive Orders have been issued to declare national martial law, giving the Federal Emergency Management Agency total control; the United Nations world population conference in Cairo produced the decision to reduce the global population by 50 percent; the Health Security Act legislation’s smart cards with microchips containing healthcare information were later “to be replaced by microchips in our right hands or foreheads.”

All this is “but the tip of the iceberg.” The brochure continues by providing a guide for action. “Recapture the machinery of government in your locale....Implement the Second Amendment rights to defend [towns, cities, and states] with militias.” And, of course, purchase their publications and audio and video cassettes.

You May Not Have A Country After 1995!

A Libertarian-Authoritarian Coalition

Since 1989 the Fully Informed Jury Association (FIJA) has undertaken a nationwide effort to retake power from the state and federal governments through jury nullification—the ability of jurors to vote
their consciences, overturning laws that they think are unjust, regardless of whether the prosecution has proven a violation of the law.

Although FIJA espouses some far-from-mainstream opinions—such as doubts about the validity of the 13th and 16th Amendments—lawmakers in 22 states have introduced FIJA legislation. In Oklahoma the legislation has passed in the House of Representatives; in Arizona, the Senate; in Utah and Montana, legislative committees.

FIJA opinions match with those of many militia members, and the relations are more than passing. According to the Montana Human Rights Network’s executive director, Christina Hoffman, “FIJA is an organizing tool for right-wing extremist groups.” Militias champion jury nullification as a tool in dismantling the government; if jurors do not enforce the laws, the government is ineffectual. By their own estimates, half of FIJA’s members support militias, and survivalist meetings are their most popular forums.

M.J. Beckman, a driving force behind FIJA, declares, “We’re headed for major adjustments in this country....They are going to come from the jury and grand jury, or they will come by violence and bloodshed....We need to have the militia out there in case [FIJA] fails.”

GOVERNMENT: FRIEND OR FOE?¹

What is your feeling toward the federal government these days?

Angry 47%
Not angry 51%

Do the activities of the federal government pose a threat to the constitutional rights enjoyed by the average American?

Threat 45%
No threat 49%

LIBERTY VS. SECURITY²

How serious do you feel terrorism is here in the United States?

Very serious 49%
Somewhat serious 40%
Hardly serious 10%

What do you think of President Clinton’s view that the “loud and angry voices” on the public airwaves, spreading hate and supporting violence, pose a problem for our society?

Agree 62%
Disagree 31%

To curb terrorism, do you favor making it easier for the FBI to gather information?

Favor 64%
Oppose 28%

Do you favor allowing the FBI to infiltrate any group it suspects might engage in criminal acts in the future?

Favor 74%
Oppose 22%

Would you be willing to give up some civil liberties if that were necessary to curb terrorism?

Willing 57%
Not willing 20%
It depends 17%

What is your personal view on gun control laws? Should they be:

More strict 63%
Less strict 7%
They’re about right 26%

Which is a greater danger to American society: conservative religious and political groups like the Christian Coalition, or liberal groups like feminists and gay activists?

Conservatives 19%
Feminists/Gays 31%
Neither 32%
Both Equally 11%

WE WANT MORE GOVERNMENT!³

In 14 categories of public expenditure the majority of Americans think that the federal government is spending too little. The areas range from crime to the environment, from infrastructure to drug rehabilitation. In 6 categories, Americans believe we are spending too much. These include assistance to blacks, welfare, assistance to big cities, national defense, foreign aid, and space exploration.

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1. Los Angeles Times Poll, April 1995
2. Los Angeles Times Poll, April 1995

Compiled by Alyssa Qualls
BOOMING BUSINESS

A trio of lobbyist groups—the Institute of Makers of Explosives (IME), the National Rifle Association (NRA), and the Fertilizer Institute—have teamed up to defeat efforts to require placing taggants in explosives, which make it easier for investigators to trace a bomb’s source. The issue of taggants, older than the Oklahoma City bombing, has had a number of incarnations, most recently last year.

IME argues that taggants could disturb the delicate balance of chemicals in explosives, causing a premature explosion. Further, it claims that the addition of taggants would cost the nation $700 million a year. The NRA fears that taggants would harm those who load their own ammunition shells. The Fertilizer Institute sees higher costs and calls for more study before any legislative action is taken.

Fifteen years and five million dollars of studies demonstrate that taggants can provide law enforcement with solid leads. The experimental use of taggants in 1980 led to a conviction in a Baltimore bombing case. At that time the IME supported legislation requiring taggants, but switched its position in the face of NRA lobbying and unresolved liability issues.

The use of taggants has been required in Switzerland for 12 years. The markers have successfully identified the manufacturers in 566 bombings and explosive seizures in ten years. The Swiss government’s studies of taggants demonstrate that taggants had no impact on the stability of explosives, that costs were not a significant problem, and that the overall impact on the economy was minimal.

The Wall Street Journal, 4 May 1995
National Public Radio, 16 May 1995

UP IN A PUFF OF SMOKE

As many legislators do, Victor Crawford turned his years of public service into dollars of private enterprise. The Maryland state
legislator-turned-lobbyist used his friendships from 16 years in the legislature, his chairmanship of the Democratic Campaign in Montgomery County, and the Tobacco Institute’s campaign contributions to stymie anti-smoking proposals in the Maryland legislature.

But, in 1991 the lobbyist’s career took what amounted to a 180-degree turn. The reason: a diagnosis of throat cancer, which has since spread to his lungs and pelvis. Doctors have linked the illness to his 49-year smoking history.

Crawford’s change has him now lobbying for the “other side.” He has denounced the tobacco industry: “[T]hey’re in it for the money...never concerned if people were dying.” He urged Maryland Governor Parris Glendening to support the nation’s toughest anti-smoking legislation, and has become an outspoken proponent of major campaign-finance reform. In a Massachusetts public service announcement, Crawford looks straight into the camera and says, “I lied. And I’m sorry.”

*Capital Eye, 15 April 1995*
*The Washington Post, 4 March 1995*
*The Times-Picayune, 6 March 1995*
Housing Mobility As an Anti-Poverty Strategy

In “A Critique of Mixed Income Housing” (Spring 1995), Howard Husock challenges federal programs that subsidize poor families to rent homes or apartments in middle-income neighborhoods. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Henry Cisneros has proposed expansion of these programs, based on the success of the Gautreaux program in Chicago, but the origins and development of the programs have come mainly from Republicans—beginning with Nixon and extending though the Reagan and Bush administrations. Thus it will not do, as Husock seems to want, to pin this aspect of housing policy on the Democratic donkey; it has had solid bipartisan support.

What the Gautreaux program (a court-mandated remedy for unconstitutional racial discrimination in public housing) does, and what HUD has proposed to expand, is counsel poor public housing families to enable them to become smart shoppers for rental housing and good tenants after they move in. The program also seeks out owners and managers of rental housing to encourage them to rent to low-income families.

It will not do, either, to describe the Gautreaux program as “arousing...inevitable and fierce resistance.” In fact, that program over the last 18 years has helped nearly 6,000 very low-income, mostly African-American households to move to many Chicago neighborhoods and 115 different Chicago suburbs, with only rare and brief instances of harassment directed against the families, and no political opposition. Nor have any of the similar programs in Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, and Hartford encountered such difficulties. Neighborhoods that would be quick to resist new construction of publicly- or even privately-sponsored subsidized housing have not been troubled by the quiet move of individual families from some of
Chicago’s poorest and most distressed neighborhoods, one-by-one, to existing apartments available for rent in the private market.

Contrary to Husock’s fears for the “long-term harms such programs will inflict on their hoped-for beneficiaries,” most of them do very well indeed. A series of studies by Professor James Rosenbaum reports that families who move to the suburbs are not isolated but have the same kinds and numbers of neighborly social contacts as do similar families in the city. They gain employment more readily than their city counterparts. Most telling and most hopeful is the progress of their children in schools. Finishing high school on college-bound tracks, gaining admission to colleges, finding employment if they do not go on to college, better jobs—on all these measures the children of Gautreaux families do significantly better than those who stayed in the city.

Taking away Husock’s false alarms of fierce resistance and his fears of harming the participants, there remain a couple of other arguments. Husock speaks of a concept of “community integrity,” rooted in stratification by income. He admits that most neighborhoods include a range of incomes, although few encompass income extremes, and argues that inner-city minority poor constitute an extreme that should not be assisted or encouraged to live in economically stronger neighborhoods. I suggest that this approach puts too much emphasis on income and too little on the values and aspirations of families trapped in inner-city ghettos. Most of them aspire to education and employment for themselves and their children in thoroughly middle-class ways, although the dreadful quality of inner-city schools and the remoteness of suburban jobs have been nearly insurmountable obstacles. The experience of Gautreaux families is confirmation that very poor, black, single-parent, female-headed households—the predominant profile of the Gautreaux families—can fit into predominantly white, middle-income suburbs and improve their own life circumstances in the process.

Husock further argues that economically stratified communities are the “unwritten rules” of American society, essential to preserving a “ladder of mobility” that will reward all who persist in saving and striving. One can grant that this concept is a significant aspect of modern urban America without accepting it as a rigid and immutable
rule. Enforcing the “rule,” as many suburbs try to do, creates its own problems—rents that price the elderly and young out of the neighborhood, shortages of lower-paid workers for suburban jobs, and highways gridlocked with reverse commuters. Most seriously, it defines community too narrowly, creating barriers rather than bridges between suburbs and city, between well-to-do and poor.

Husock’s alternative solution to the desperate problems of inner-city poverty is subsidized home ownership in large inner-city developments on the model of the Nehemiah project in Brooklyn. That commendable program reaches only the upper portion of the public housing population and it does not help them reach suburban job markets as the Gautreaux program does. But it would be a mistake to limit national policy to either of these alternatives. Poor families should be able to choose better housing and better neighborhoods nearby or in suburban job markets. Inner-city conditions have so deteriorated that only multiple strategies will suffice. Portable subsidies and assistance in using them are not a panacea, but they deserve, on their record, to be one part of our national response to the problems of concentrated urban poverty.

Kale Williams, Professor in Applied Ethics, Loyola University, Chicago

Mixed-Income Housing: The Issue Is Race

It is worth emphasizing, at the risk of seeming utopian—or even worse, politically unfashionable—an easily ignored point: reducing the high and growing income inequality of the United States would greatly alleviate many of the problems of housing and community that Howard Husock addresses. It is also a desirable goal in its own right, to be achieved through good jobs as much as possible, through effective redistributive policies where necessary.

Yet if we assume continued poverty and inequality at current levels, Husock’s argument is unpersuasive and misleading. First, he misrepresents the Gautreaux case and Clinton policy. In the Gautreaux decision the court concluded that the Chicago Housing Authority
(CHA) had deliberately discriminated for decades by concentrating African-Americans in historically black areas—incidentally destroying older, viable communities—in order to accommodate the prejudices of many whites. The problem was not intrinsic to public housing, as Husock argues, but was rather a reflection of systematic political discrimination against blacks. The court provided two remedies: first, building “scattered site,” small-scale public housing and, second, helping CHA residents use federal vouchers to search for housing in parts of the Chicago metropolitan area where there were relatively few African-Americans and poor people.

It was not a perfect solution. There was resistance to scattered-site housing within Chicago, partly because the new housing construction did not include suburbs. But there was no resistance—certainly nothing “fierce”—to the small-scale, largely suburban voucher program. Though blacks sometimes experienced discrimination in suburbs, on the whole the families, especially the children, fared better after their moves. There were virtually no cases of Gautreaux-program black families disturbing the communities into which they moved.

The Clinton/Cisneros policies, including a pilot research project called Moving To Opportunity (MTO), are based on expansion and modification of such counseling as an adjunct to the existing housing voucher program. There was temporary resistance in only one of the five MTO sites, metropolitan Baltimore, and that was largely the result of misinformation and political opportunism. It is wise to try to minimize backlash in designing such programs, but letting the threat dictate policy validates racism.

Ultimately race, not “mixed income,” is the issue. Indeed, there is relatively little resistance to mixed-income housing. There may be a trend toward more narrowly circumscribed residential areas, especially in new suburbs, but historically most urban neighborhoods and suburbs, especially as they age, include a mix of incomes, even if the distribution may vary.

The issue is not mixing “income extremes,” a red herring Husock raises. The Gautreaux and Clinton voucher programs are designed merely to help low-income voucher recipients (primarily African-
Americans) take advantage of housing that already exists and is eligible for Section 8 subsidies. Those counseling programs simply try to make blacks aware of opportunities, not forcibly “relocate” them or even force landlords to accept them. It gently intervenes, through education, to redress market failures.

Under the guise of objecting to mixed-income neighborhoods, which already exist and generate moderate concerns at most, Husock seems to be objecting to racial integration. Many of the new black suburbs, both poor and middle-class, that he cites as evidence of progress continue old policies of racial isolation that are unique for African-Americans. Blacks may legitimately choose to live in city or suburban neighborhoods that are predominately black, though it would not be legitimate for them to exclude other groups. Both points apply to whites. But blacks should have the same choice as whites in the housing market, as they do not now. This holds whether they are using their paychecks, an inheritance, or the vouchers that are one small means of redistributing income and creating more equality.

There is nothing inconsistent about insisting on such freedom of choice and simultaneously working to strengthen—and diversify—poor neighborhoods, whether through Nehemiah projects, reformed public housing, or mixed-income developments. Each strategy has worked; each has its limits. Of course, though, the most powerful measures for improving such neighborhoods, though not the only ones, are those that make people less poor.

_David Moberg, Senior Editor, In These Times_

**Affirmative Action and the Death of Political Vision**

Clint Bolick (Spring 1995) is correct to argue that proliferating race-based policies exacerbate racial division. Unfortunately some reform attempts, as we are beginning to see, are guilty of the same thing.

The American people want change in policies such as affirmative action; but they are also nervous, according to polls, of our nation’s
deepening divisions. We must be as skeptical of hasty efforts to wean the nation off these policies as we should have been skeptical of race-based affirmative action policies in the first place. The current debate could lead to far more racial division than the policies themselves do.

Conducting debates over complex issues in a divided nation is complicated enough under the best of circumstances, but they become especially difficult when the political process is one in which parties and their consultants regularly search for wedge issues that splinter and divide society. Today’s coalitions are held together through the calculus of division, not a bold vision for social progress. Politicians who wish to appeal to humanity’s better angels are in short supply.

Few would deny that our race problem has grown worse, but there is almost no clear thinking on what to do about it. Affirmative action is a powerfully symbolic issue and provides a good illustration of how degraded public discourse has become. Some are tiptoeing along its sensitive racial fault lines; others are blasting through the barricades of racial sensitivity, sensing major electoral advantage ahead. But almost no one is offering a vision for an alternative.

There are many good reasons to reform affirmative action, but the logic of this and other social policy debates thus far seems to be: the good that was not achieved by building up existing policies will somehow be accomplished by simply tearing them down. The lack of a shared vision for social or racial progress in which these debates can occur denies the antagonists the freedom to be honest.

Citing their own separate reasons, both defenders and critics of affirmative action agree that things have gotten worse. Perhaps in this common assessment lies opportunity. However, we must do more than simply reform policy if we hope to help the neediest Americans. Policy reform alone will do little for children born in neighborhoods where multigenerational dependency is the norm, kids are having kids, armed adolescents kill for sneakers, and the most common route out of the neighborhood is through the morgue. Nor will policy change alone make our society more free from racial attitudes and subtle slurs.
The debate in which Americans need to engage is about our failure to create a good society through political and legal means. We have tried such means for decades. But now we must look to the condition of our character and look into our hearts to face America’s most pressing social problems, especially problems of race. To reverse the decline of our neighborhoods and our schools, every American must work to restore the value of community in our country. Building a just and civil society begins in the communities of our nation—only here can we make a real difference.

Don E. Eberly, President, The Commonwealth Foundation
CONTRIBUTORS

TIM BEARDSLEY is on the board of editors of *Scientific American* and has written extensively about genes and behavior.

RALF DAHRENDORF is the Warden of St. Antony’s College at Oxford and a member of the British House of Lords. He is a former Director of the London School of Economics, and is currently chairing an independent Commission on Wealth Creation and Social Cohesion.


AMITAI ETZIONI is the founder of the Center for Communitarian Policy Studies at The George Washington University.

CAROLE J. HAMNER is the assistant director for communications at the Pew Partnership for Civic Change. Her article is based on research performed for a Pew Partnership report series, *Issues in Brief*.

SARAH HORTON is a freelance writer in the San Francisco area and a former managing editor of *The Responsive Community*.

CHARLES KAMASAKI is the senior vice president at the National Council of La Raza.

PETER KATZ is a San Francisco-based consultant. He is author of *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* and an advocate for citizen-based planning. His article is courtesy of the Trust for Public Land. For more information about the Trust, call 1-800-714-LAND.

JOHN LEO is a contributing editor and columnist for *U.S. News and World Report*.

C. EUGENE STEUERLE is a senior fellow at the Urban Institute and a columnist for *Tax Notes* magazine. He is author of *The Tax Decade* and co-author of *Retooling Social Security for the Twenty-First Century*.

W. BRADFORD WILCOX is the editor of *Regeneration Quarterly: A Forum for Orthodox Engagement* and is a graduate student in the sociology department at Princeton University.