

The Responsive Community

Volume 9, Issue 1, Winter 1998/99

Issue Editor—Daniel Doherty*

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

- 4 President William Jefferson Clinton, Vice President Albert Gore, Jr., First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, William J. Bennett, Betty Friedan, William A. Galston

META-THEORY

- 10 **Taking Autonomy Seriously: Some Liberal Doubts about *The New Golden Rule***
William R. Lund
- 23 **Macroscopic Action—On Amitai Etzioni's Contribution to Social Theory**
Hans Joas
- 32 **The Apolitics of Community (in an Era without Politics)**
Dennis H. Wrong
- 38 **From Compliance to Community in the Works of Amitai Etzioni**
Edward W. Lehman

THE PARTICULARS

- 48 **The Rules of Engagement and the Argument Culture**
Deborah Tannen

continued...

* *A special thanks to the co-editors and others for their editorial assistance and guidance. For obvious reasons our regular editor, Amitai Etzioni, sat this issue out.*

- 52 **When Theory Meets Practice:
Communitarian Ethics and the Family**
Don Browning
- 62 **Communitarian Families: A New Center, Not a
Compromise**
David M. Anderson
- 67 ***Genetic Fix at Twenty-Five***
Thomas Magnell

THE WORLD

- 72 **Toward an International Human Rights (and
Responsibilities) Regime: Some Obstacles**
Daniel A. Bell
- 79 **Rediscovering British Communitarianism**
Henry Tam
- 83 **A Spanish Perspective on Communitarianism**
José Pérez Adán

FURTHER CHALLENGES

- 87 **Making Communities More Responsive**
Robert E. Goodin
- 93 **Amitai Etzioni: An American Individualist**
Everett C. Ladd
- 99 **Tough Questions for Liberal Communitarians**
Benjamin R. Barber
- 105 **Roadblocks on the Deliberative Path**
Dennis Chong
- 113 **Commitment, the Multiple-Self Approach,
and Communitarianism**
Elias L. Khalil
- 120 **Contributors**

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The Responsive Community (ISSN 1053-0754) is published quarterly by the Center for Policy Research, Inc., a nonprofit corporation. The journal is listed in the following indexing/abstracting services: PAIS, IBZ, IBR, and Sociological Abstracts. Microform copies are available through Microfilms, Inc. Distributed by EBSCO: (205) 991-6600; and by Ubiquity Distributors, Inc.: (718) 875-5491. Visit our web site at <http://www.gwu.edu/~ccps>.

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Subscriptions: Rates for individuals are: \$27 per year; \$48 for two years; \$17 per year for full-time students. Libraries and institutions: \$70 per year. Subscribers outside the U.S. should add \$7 per year for additional mailing costs. Send subscriptions and changes of address to: Circulation Manager, *The Responsive Community*, 2020 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 282, Washington, DC 20006-1846, Tel: (800) 245-7460. FAX: (202) 994-1606.

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Some time before I actually met Amitai Etzioni personally and we became good friends, I happened to pick up a copy of *The Active Society* which someone had left on a desk I was using at the Frederick Lewis Allen Room of the New York Public Library. I opened the book and it really resonated with me. Its message to me at that time when I was, you might say, starting the modern women's movement, was that you cannot have an agenda for 10 or 20 years hence, much less for a century hence. You can only have a sense of how things are and might be on the cutting edge. It was a warning to me of the dangers of radical rhetoric in the abstract, rhetoric that does not resonate with current realities and the concrete possibility of change in the present or near future. That was a very valuable lesson for me in the early days of the modern women's movement and gave a sort of philosophical grounding for the focus of my own leadership which was, from the very beginning, geared to concrete possibilities of change in the mainstream of American society.

Since then, Amitai has become a close personal friend. And without giving up any of my concerns for the individual rights of women, I find myself now equally concerned with the values of community. In a certain sense, having spent most of my adult life as a leader and participant-observer on the cutting edge of the Active Society—which the women's movement is and will continue to be if it is in tune with the responsive community—I welcome Amitai's work because it helps give me a theoretical underpinning.

Betty Friedan

Amitai Etzioni took communitarianism out of the academy and brought it to the attention of political leaders and citizens. Using practical examples and prose accessible to nonspecialist citizens, he showed what it might mean to take a public philosophy of rights and responsibilities seriously. In so doing, he added a distinctive new voice to the dialogue of democracy and helped shift the center of gravity of that dialogue.

In addition (and this is rare among scholars), Etzioni understood the need for a new social movement to advance communitarian

thinking. The institutions he has founded during the 1990s have served as arenas within which individuals and groups sharing a broadly communitarian outlook can exchange ideas and rally behind proposals on which they agree. The transformation of isolated individuals—academics, activists, and ordinary citizens alike—into a significant community of discourse and action is perhaps his most important achievement.

William A. Galston

META-THEORY

Taking Autonomy Seriously: Some Liberal Doubts about *The New Golden Rule*

William R. Lund

Amitai Etzioni's *New Golden Rule* builds on his prior efforts at creating a sensible and morally plausible communitarianism. He continues to criticize what he takes to be the excessive individualism of contemporary liberal theory and practice, but now also takes great pains to distinguish his communitarianism from harsher forms of social conservatism and to reject any search for a common good that relies on coercion and unreflective traditionalism. His central thesis is that societies should seek to balance "universal individual rights and the common good" and that citizens should follow his new golden rule: "respect society's moral order as you would have society respect and uphold your autonomy." But despite its many attractions, there are still unresolved tensions in his argument that raise certain doubts about autonomy's status as a core value in his "good society" and about whether his rejection of moral conservatism is really sufficient to protect individual freedom and equality.

The Good News in *The New Golden Rule*

As a citizen, I find a great deal of good news in Etzioni's communitarian gospel and its powerful call for a regeneration of values. While avoiding hyperbolic assertions of moral crisis, he nonetheless makes clear both that recent increases in freedom have been accompanied by

mounting evidence of ethically dubious behavior, and that the recent curl back towards greater concern for social order and responsibility has included some misdirected attacks on personal autonomy. Thus we confront a defining moment in deciding whether moral regeneration should rely on “traditional, especially religious, values” or on more secular and inclusive core commitments, and whether efforts to promote greater social order should be grounded on moral suasion or legal coercion. Etzioni exhibits continued faith in citizens’ ability to answer such questions and to define and manage their public life; and all of us have reason to welcome his refusal to read evidence of public apathy and cynicism as a justification for lowering our expectations of the prospects of reasonable self-government.

As a non-libertarian liberal, I also appreciate *The New Golden Rule’s* modulations in some of the more troubling aspects of other communitarian literature. Etzioni’s good society has “faith in faith” and seeks to promote order and virtue through “the moral voice of the community, education, persuasion, and exhortation” rather than relying on coercive legislation. Correlatively, he cautions that a sound democracy is not simply a voting machine that tallies up current majority preferences, and he suggests certain procedural restraints on democracy to provide time for deliberation, reflection, and the transformation of unrefined and autonomy-threatening preferences. Moreover, while noting that excessive rights claims can threaten social health and viability, and that rights must be contextualized in social responsibilities, he argues that this should lead us to seek only “a *temporary* moratorium on the minting of *new* rights.” Given their role in protecting autonomy, social adjustments regarding rights must be carefully “notched” in order to avoid slippery slopes toward authoritarian impositions.

Etzioni also rejects community-based ethical relativism and ruefully notes that liberals have had “a field day” with the claims of some communitarians that particular values and conventions can be justified and morally compelling simply by virtue of a community’s acceptance of them. In deflecting such criticisms, he engages in a chapter-length search for external criteria that can be used in the moral evaluation of particular shared understandings. If such understandings are the product of a sound democratic process, then we have an obvious improvement on elite imposition and a necessary, but not

sufficient, sign of “normative accountability.” Such conventions will be further legitimized if they comport well with higher level (but still internal) understandings of the sort often embedded in written or unwritten constitutions. But, he suggests, we need “a still higher framing criterion” in order to evaluate constitutions and societal traditions themselves. While admitting its visionary nature, he argues that, if we can eschew cultural relativism, cross-cultural dialogues might yield a universal value consensus that could both ground human rights claims and check societies’ particular decisions and background values.

His ultimate antidote to relativism lies in appealing to certain primary moral concepts that “*present themselves to us as morally compelling in and of themselves*” and that are the product of a universal moral sense that renders the value of certain virtues and goods as “self-evident.” On that view, products of his lower-level criteria must all be tested against the need for “moral order and autonomy.” Those virtues provide a “final substantive normative criterion”—with the same self-evident value as life and health—to constrain the relativism implicit in appeals to community and shared values.

Etzioni’s powerful defense of autonomy as a core norm of any good society should provide some comfort to liberals exercised by notions of *Gemeinschaft* community overriding and swallowing individual freedom in the name of order and locally shared values. Such fears have foreclosed meaningful dialogues between egalitarian liberals and communitarians and precluded potential coalition building aimed at common goals, especially that of reducing crippling economic inequalities that conflict with both liberal justice and responsible civic engagement. Insofar as *The New Golden Rule* can contribute to softening liberal concerns and enhancing such dialogues, it is indeed welcome news. To see if this is possible, though, the nature of the defense of autonomy must first be examined.

The What and Why of Autonomy

Autonomy, of course, is an elusive concept that has been defined in conflicting ways, including accounts that closely relate it to either political concerns for negative liberty, moral concerns for a particular substantive way of life, or metaphysical concerns for freedom of the

will. For his part, Etzioni defines it as a “social virtue” rather than as an individual capacity or achievement and suggests that questions about autonomy concern whether or not society “provides structured opportunities and legitimation for individual and subgroup expression of their particular values, needs, and preferences.” In responding to charges of vagueness, he goes on to add that autonomy includes both “negative and positive liberties,” and that it must be balanced against competing concerns for order and valuable traditions.

While not especially vague, referring to both “negative and positive liberties” does create some troubling ambiguities. By including “positive liberties,” he tilts toward defining autonomy as a matter of particular behavior that the state is to respect and hangs the question of whether individuals are autonomous or not on the moral content of their judgments. For example, he takes up Harry Frankfurt’s justly influential argument that the defining criteria of personhood are the capacity for self-reflection and the ability to act based not only on current desires, but also on “second-order desires,” or desires to have or reject certain kinds of desires. For Etzioni, that philosophical analysis mirrors both psychological findings and religious insights regarding the internally divided nature of human beings. Since we are “savages” at birth yet capable of being socialized to virtue, we are permanently torn between natural desires and a checking “moral voice...’doomed’ to a struggled between a lower and a higher (a debased and a nobler) self.”

The problem here stems from the moralized nature of Etzioni’s second-order desires and their definitional connection to autonomy. That is, there is no conceptual or empirical necessity that reflective desires have any particular moral content, and the capacity to will what we reflectively want to will is not merely a synonym for the triumph of higher over lower selves. Treating it as if it were simply defines autonomy as achieving a particular moral content along the lines of either classic teleologies (in which the goal is desires that accord with various conceptions of the human good) or a Kantian effort at rational self-determination. In either case, and Etzioni seems to lean to the former, the dangers for the individual’s negative liberties are clear. If autonomy requires a particular substance for our second-order desires, and if a good society is supposed to promote such autonomy, then we confront the nightmares of being “forced to be

free” through policies that override individual judgments about the good life in the name of “real” freedom and a particular picture of the content of such lives.

Even if we emphasize his reference to negative liberties, or being free from intentional external restrictions, we face yet other problems stemming from both of his apparently distinct justifications of autonomy. The first reflects his functionalist methodology, in which “certain *needs*” are “universal” requirements that must be met in one way or another if a society is to survive. Autonomy is such a functional requirement insofar as the opportunity for, and legitimation of, individual preference expression “enhances the ability of the society to adapt to change” by countering governments’ tendency to ignore or be unaware of troubles caused by current policies. Moreover, autonomy allows societies to take account of citizens’ “different capabilities and their specific environmental circumstances,” thereby avoiding the inefficiencies of one-size-fits-all policies. Finally, autonomy is functional in allowing for the expression and accommodation of “sub-group differences” and preventing the collapse of religious and ethnic differences into bloody intra-national conflicts.

His functionalism prompts the insight that even social virtues can be pushed too far and that, while essential, autonomy can become dysfunctional if it is not bounded by the alternative need for order. For Etzioni, the two virtues are related in an “inverting symbiosis,” or a “*blending of two basic formations that—up to a point—enhance one another...but if either element intensifies beyond a given level, it begins to diminish the other: the same two formations become antagonistic.*” Thus the good society will recognize the mutual relationship between order and autonomy, and its search for an enhancing rather than antagonistic balance will be a contingent matter of empirical judgments regarding the society’s current tilt. Not surprisingly, he argues that we have tilted too far toward individualism, rights, and economic deregulation. That may seem to enhance autonomy, but, in ignoring the alternative claims of community, responsibility, and the common good, it is actually dysfunctional and threatens both order and autonomy by undermining the inverting symbiosis.

Etzioni’s defense of autonomy and order is not exhausted by functionalist instrumentalism. As noted above, he also justifies them

as self-evident values that “speak compellingly for themselves.” Drawing on Robert Wright and James Q. Wilson, he treats this ethical compulsion as a product of a universal moral sense often grounded in arguments about “moral genes” or the “universal socialization experiences” of creatures with our particular evolutionary and cultural needs. In appealing to a “moral sense,” he hopes both to put the value of autonomy beyond the vagaries of ethical consequentialism, and to do so without relying on the individualist and rationalistic baggage associated with Kant’s deontological alternative to such consequentialism.

The deontological tradition neglects the community’s role in mediating, through socialization, between individuals’ reason and their conduct. Moreover, as with the original moral sense theorists’ emphasis on sentiment, Etzioni downplays moral reasoning to highlight the immediacy of our perception of moral right and wrong. While eschewing the subjectivist claim that his commitment to order and autonomy is merely a personal preference, he nonetheless argues that their ethically compelling character is analogous to religious “revelation.” Reasoned justification may provide accountability and articulation for our values, but their “essence” and the universal appeal of autonomy and order are better understood as more emotive and instinctual.

Threats to Autonomy

For Etzioni then, autonomy is a core value because of both its societal functions and its appeal to our moral sense. While novel and insightful, this justificatory strategy raises several disturbing questions. First, does his non-consequentialist, moral sense justification ultimately collapse into the functionalist case? He argues that autonomy is an ultimate value because without it “all other virtues lack standing because they presume a measure of free will, i.e., of autonomy.” That is heartening to liberal ears: linking voluntary endorsement to genuine virtue, and making autonomy a constitutive rather than instrumental good. Yet, if those other virtues are defined as character traits contributing to society’s (or the individual’s) functional health, the intuitive moral sense appeal of autonomy is circularly linked to its functionalism. Is there, in simple terms, a positive moral sense appeal to actions that are inconsistent with order and

functional health? If that is conceptually impossible, then autonomy's value is limited to providing a metaphysical base for socially functional behavior, a view that can quite easily have conservative and (negative) liberty-denying implications.

A second and more troubling question emerges when we ask about applications of his general framework. If, despite my last paragraph, we grant that he has two distinct justifications, then we will have to decide what to do when functionalism and the "moral sense" come into conflict. How should we resolve conflicts between order and autonomy or conflicts between those basic values and other secondary values? It is, for example, one thing to say that functionalism and humanity's moral sense both condemn failing to care for children. But matters break down when we seek common intuitions regarding trade-offs between spending time with children and providing well for them by prioritizing one's career. In the absence of some more general principle, Etzioni leaves us to an ad hoc balancing of these competing considerations. When we ask whether greater or lesser autonomy is warranted in a particular case, the answer will depend on public dialogues and decisions rooted either in conflicting products of the moral sense or in contested empirical questions regarding the functional consequences of such autonomy. (Is it divorce *per se* or pre-divorce conflicts that create emotional and behavioral problems for children?; Is pornography a causal agent or merely a corollary of underlying problems in relation to rape and physical abuse of women?)

This naturally leads us to questions about political authority. Etzioni does not specifically address that concept, but both his general theory and his justifications of autonomy do have some relatively clear implications for how we should think about it. Following Richard Flathman's *The Practice of Political Authority*, we can treat authority as a "formal-procedural" resolution of deep and intractable conflicts between free and equal persons. Where there is no right-for-all answer to such disputes, the best solution lies in the willing creation of rules and offices whose occupants are merely "in authority" and whose pronouncements and legal judgments are obligatory only in virtue of their holding office and ruling according to specified procedures rather than because of their special insights. On this typically liberal view, the limits authority imposes will be justified by the acceptability

of the background rules to equal citizens. Alternatively, we can follow a “substantive-purposive” tradition in which authority reflects and aims at instantiating a consensus on facts and values, and in which it is a personal attribute of those with superior knowledge of the shared purposes of an activity or community. Since there should be authoritative answers as to how best to achieve common goals, authority is a matter of those judged to be “an authority” on such matters, issuing supposedly factual claims about the world to their unequal fellows.

If our public balancing emphasizes functionalism, we appear to be left with the latter model and its presumption of inequality. Given a consensus on society’s functional prerequisites and common purposes, there should be empirically correct answers as to the proper balance of conflicting means in particular cases such as the divorce and pornography examples. Given his commitment to a constrained democracy, I am not suggesting that Etzioni wants government by Platonic guardians. However, the real questions here concern the scope a theory leaves for democracy and the nature of its guiding criteria: Are they comparatively substantive or more formal and abstract? Are they a matter of achieving particular states of affairs or a more open-ended commitment to, say, individual agency?

On those questions, Etzioni’s functionalism appears rather more substantive-purposive than formal-procedural and seems to open the door to considering a wider range of questions as appropriate matters for democracy. Even with his constraints on simple majoritarianism, the necessity of balancing particular cases leads at some point to democratic head-counting. The danger is that such aggregative procedures will often be tainted by a lack of public impartiality. As citizens struggle with contested empirical claims, they naturally will be tempted to discount one side on the grounds that they are highly unlikely ever to suffer from authoritative rules and regulations based on its denial. The more improbable it is that I will ever seek divorce or abortion or read dirty books, the easier it will be to find convincing the charge that such conduct is dysfunctional. Thus the functionalist approach shapes a democratic process that takes in too many questions, makes it too easy to discount the equality of fellow citizens, and may undermine autonomy by allowing public decisions to override individual judgments about the best balance of conflicting values.

Moral sense arguments also seem to tend toward a substantive-purposeful account of authority. Insofar as they rest on a particular account of a good human life, they too will have a settled account of supposedly shared purposes and the ethically best means of achieving those goals. Thus the proper balances of ends and means will be open to differing and unequally valid intuitions in particular cases. The idea here can be drawn out by analyzing Etzioni's application of the concept of "virtue" to societal wholes rather than individual decisions and character. Since the notion of virtue typically refers us to some trait or disposition that enables an X to be a well-performing thing of its kind, the concept is most applicable to things with clear and measurable performance functions such as knives or hearts or race horses, and less applicable when things lack clearly agreed upon functions. Thus, in order to make sense of "social" virtues and to evaluate whether a society is a good example of its kind, we need some argument that renders the functions of society itself less obscure, some argument not about what societies need to be functional, but about what functions they themselves are meant to perform.

Of course that is notoriously contentious. Is the goal of society *per se* to amass military power, to maximize GNP, or to help individuals realize and experience good lives somehow defined? While *The New Golden Rule* occasionally suggests that society's function is simply to maintain itself as an end in itself, Etzioni's critique of unreflective traditionalism, his response to criticisms of earlier versions of functionalism as biased against change, and the general effort to evaluate types of stability as better or worse all refute such a notion. The general spirit of his work seems rather to treat such stability as a means to the goodness of individual lives. Thus his argument for attributing virtues to societies looks something like this: society's function is to enhance the prospects for individuals to achieve the good; a proper balance of order and autonomy yields various conditions that facilitate the performance of that function; therefore, that balance constitutes the virtue of societies.

This ultimately requires specifying the substantive human good that constitutes the purpose of society. In characterizing the vast array of such views, we can always ask both a metaethical and political question. First, is the presence of particular behavior sufficient for the goodness of a life, or is it also a necessary condition that it flow out of

the inner convictions of the individual? Second, does the theory assume that the law and other public action can directly promote good lives, or does it limit politics to the more indirect role of providing rules and procedures under which individuals can then determine their own good lives?

Etzioni, it seems to me, tilts toward the first option on each of those questions. On the first, his view of a good life might be described as the sound integration of competing values into a coherent whole. Rum-maging too quickly through his work, we find various formulations of this notion. In *Social Problems*, a good life is one that eschews devotion to materialism in favor of integrating and attending to “‘*inner space*,’ that is, the search for greater insight into self and better relations with others,” as well as education, artistic expression, and public engagement. In *The Moral Dimension*, it involves living out Buber’s “I-We view” so that individuals live well to the extent that their lives reflect the idea that “*individuals and community are both completely essential*” and that “*the individual and the community make each other and require each other.*” In *The New Golden Rule*, given that we are torn between our animal and human natures, the good life involves both bounded autonomy and virtues contributing to order in the name of moving from our “lower” to our “higher” selves.

With that, it appears that his rejection of ethical consequentialism is actually rather limited. He (rightly) rejects the preference satisfaction conception of the good at work in much of utilitarianism and welfare economics, but retains consequentialism’s maximizing directive and simply plugs in a substitute conception of the good whose incidence is to be increased. Replacing economic satisfactions with his “moral sense” (or functionalist) conception of the good improves things, but it still leaves him very close to the explicitly teleological conceptions of some of his communitarian allies and conservative opponents. Such views ride rather roughly with commitments to the inner persuasion aspects of autonomy since, if we can increase the incidence of the agent-neutral conception of the good, we will be maximizing value whether or not it is accepted by those who will have to enact it.

On the second question, Etzioni sides with the view that law and public policy should be aimed directly at maximizing the good.

Despite his criticisms of coercive social conservatism, much of his agenda reflects his claim that the law is “*first and foremost the continuation of morality by other means.*” If the community and the citizen are an interdependent whole, then the moral goodness of individual lives depends on the maintenance of the community’s shared values, and political attention to (and support for) those values is a necessary correction to liberalism’s overly individualistic and procedural demand that the state should be neutral on the good life. For Etzioni, such neutrality has caused many of our “dysfunctional” problems as the “long- and short-term neglect of shared values led to a thinning of the moral order....”

For liberals, the chief problem here lies in the fact that public balancing along these lines will tend to undermine the moral equality of citizens, which requires that politics provide a neutral framework within which citizens are free to act on or alter convictions regarding the good life and the best balance of conflicting ethical considerations. In denying room for a principled constraint on authoritative impositions of either a functionalist or “moral sense” good, Etzioni rejects that conception of moral equality and risks outcomes that could be reasonably rejected by those who will have to live under them. Of course, as Dworkin has suggested in his essay “Liberalism,” teleological theories are consistent with another conception of equality that requires treating individuals “as the truly good or wise person would wish to be treated,” and Etzioni’s assumption that we would all prefer to act on our “higher” rather than our “lower” selves mirrors that view. But if that is the good to be made available to all equally, then paternalistic and moralistic legislation can be seen as actually enhancing equality and freedom, and the “negative liberty” side of his autonomy will suffer serious threats.

Inadequate Protections?

Given his general framework, Etzioni has done about as much as possible to ward off those threats. His critique of moralistic conservatives and the pains he takes to elevate autonomy itself to a core status mitigate those dangers and protect individuals against tradition- and community-based impositions. Similar mitigating features emerge from his warnings against those “who base individual rights only on community needs” since that leaves them, and the autonomy they

protect, “without normative accounting if community needs...can be shown to conflict with autonomy.” In practice, that has led him to reject, in his *Rights and the Common Good*, the punishment of hate speech, and to treat other restrictions on speech and privacy rights as very open questions requiring further deliberation about where to draw the line between individual rights and community needs.

However, insofar as those deliberations reflect the teleological core of his argument, they will inevitably reflect a hierarchical ranking of citizens’ ways of life. In simple terms, some judgments about the good will be viewed as higher and lower in terms of the community’s functioning or the achievement of higher selves. Authoritative impositions of such inegalitarian appraisals will be limited by autonomy and individual rights, but, while those values are not to be derived from “community needs,” they are for Etzioni always to be balanced against the functional needs of the community and the true good of individuals. If that is characterized as weighing the community’s good or the individual’s achievement of her higher self against only losses imposed on the animal desires, it seems easier than Etzioni imagines to roll through the various “notches” he provides to protect against a tilt away from autonomy.

As examples, consider his call for garbage to be put out in transparent bags, for welfare recipients to be fingerprinted, and for juries to be instructed that they may infer guilt from a defendant’s refusal to testify. He also defends bans on certain kinds of expression, including those informing people how best to shoot federal agents or seduce young children. Now I am not suggesting that freedom would be extinguished if we adopted such measures in the name of greater recycling, eliminating fraud, reducing crime, etc. Nor am I suggesting that his call, in an essay in *The American Prospect*, for greater reliance on nonviolent public shaming—to add a measure of “psychic discomfort” to the calculations of those who violate “the community’s values”—would make a mockery of The Bill of Rights and reduce us to Orwellian nightmares.

I am, however, suggesting that his preference for autonomy and the voluntary internalization of shared values can more easily than he suspects give way to harsher and more freedom-denying approaches. When rational persuasion and other efforts to induce voluntary change

fail, there is the law and less coercive, but still heavily manipulative, mechanisms such as shame that will undermine the equality and autonomy of many citizens. For Etzioni, community is less a place than “a set of attributes,” including “affect-laden relationships...and, second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings....” Since individuals seeking good lives in a pluralistic context will inevitably come into conflict, our chief problem is protecting—from coercion and manipulation—those who fall outside the “affect-laden relationships” and who reject some or many of the “shared values” of a particular community. As Etzioni recognizes, “communitarian societies are much more prone to a centripetal breakdown than a centrifugal one”—that means continual efforts to expand their sphere of influence and continual encroachments on decisions and judgments that individuals need to make for themselves if we are to treat them as responsible agents. If that is so, the inevitable strains against autonomy need to be met with something more than functionalism and the moral sense. However dubious it might be on other grounds, the liberalism of equal respect, stringent individual rights, and public neutrality on the proper balance of conflicting ethical requirements may still be the best course for those who want to take autonomy seriously.

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Macroscopic Action—On Amitai Etzioni's Contribution to Social Theory

Hans Joas

Amitai Etzioni's lifework has many aspects—both in the world of scholarship and in the world of political activism. Even within the scholarly realm it is difficult to gain an overview of his contributions to very diverse fields. We could conveniently distinguish different Etzionis: the influential sociologist of organizations, the innovative peace researcher, the general social theorist, the relentless critic of overreaching economists, or the perceptive normative thinker. My focus in the following remarks will be on just one of these fields of his work, namely his contribution to general social theory, though I am deeply convinced that an adequate analysis of this area would have to relate it to all the others and even to the strong activist side of his personality. One cannot fully understand an abstract work of general social theorizing without its basis in empirical expertise; and one does not do justice to Etzioni's programmatic writings and his organizational entrepreneurship without seeing their foundation in a comprehensive social-theoretical worldview. The fact that communitarian thought in the 1980s and 1990s developed more out of debates in moral philosophy than out of professional social-scientific theorizing has left its traces. Many authors writing about Etzioni in the context of communitarianism, followers and critics alike, tend to ignore the book that prefigured Etzioni's more recent statements: his theory of societal and political processes, originally published in 1968, *The Active Society*. It remains, in my eyes, an unsurpassed attempt to develop a theory of macroscopic action. Since it has not received the attention it deserves, it is worthwhile looking back on its reception and, more importantly still, on the rich potential its main lines of thought contain.

When the voluminous work came out in that year of turmoil, international attention, measured in the number and length of reviews and review essays, was quite lively. But after 1968 the book soon fell into almost complete oblivion. A provisional explanation for this neglect could be that many activists of the time—to whom Etzioni had dedicated the book, mentioning his students at Columbia and Berkeley—soon lost interest in the conceptual work of sociological theory, whereas those firmly rooted in professional work in the social sciences (mis-)understood Etzioni's work as a plea for permanent mobilization or an overpowering planning state. A closer look at the general development of sociological theory after 1968 makes the misunderstanding and neglect of Etzioni's work even more surprising.

If we accept the story of the development of American sociology that Jeffrey Alexander has proposed, we should distinguish between three main phases in the post-World War II era. After a relatively stable hegemony of Talcott Parsons's so-called structural functionalism in the fifties and early sixties, the late sixties brought a concerted effort of various theoretical schools to dethrone Parsons. These efforts, made easier by internal weaknesses in Parsons's work and supported by an identification of the Parsonian sociological mainstream with the embattled political establishment, were clearly successful in the negative sense. Sociology lost its integrating paradigm and turned into a more or less peaceful coexistence of schools and approaches: from symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology via conflict sociology and Marxism to sociological behaviorism and rational choice. None of these competing or coexisting approaches was, however, successful in the positive sense of replacing the earlier ruling paradigm with a new one comparable in scope and power. For Alexander and other neo-Parsonians in general, it took until the 1980s to supersede this age of anarchic pluralism and to regain the self-confidence of a new synthesis, a new theoretical movement. The new synthesis, according to this view, lies in a revitalization of the Parsonian heritage, modified in accordance with the relative merits of the anti-Parsonian criticism of the sixties and seventies.

One problem with this construction is that Etzioni's 1968 book cannot be subsumed to such a description. It is perhaps not coincidental that Etzioni's monumental achievement is not mentioned once in Alexander's history. Etzioni's attempt was clearly synthetic at the outset. *The Active Society* explicitly envisaged a synthesis of the achieve-

ments of Parsonian thinking with cybernetic systems theory and conflict sociology; given its background in Martin Buber's philosophy of intersubjectivity and existentialist reasoning about the authenticity of human life in society, some aspects of the interactionist and phenomenological criticisms of Parsons came in, too. One could call Etzioni the first dissident from Parsonianism with a full-blown systematic alternative. A more profound reason for the neglect of this book could thus be that Etzioni came up with an alternative to Parsons when the warring factions were just happy about their success in dethroning Parsons and did not feel the necessity for a successor.

But it is not only the fact of Etzioni's systematic contribution itself that seems to make him an exception to the general tendencies as they are described by Alexander. More than that, it is the fact that Etzioni anticipated a great deal of the substantial innovations contained in the work of later and contemporary theoretical attempts. This can make one optimistic with respect to a belated reception—for which there are already some clear signs. All theorists today who retain an interest in the question of “whether society is to be the servant or the master of the instruments it creates” (Etzioni), without, however, believing in government as the hierarchically superior and all-powerful authority for this mastering of social processes, will be attracted to Etzioni's theory of macroscopic action.

Defining the Theory

What are the theory's main characteristics? The most important, in my view, is Etzioni's repudiation of a very frequent conflation. He resolutely denies that the dichotomy of micro and macro in sociology should be identified with the distinction of action and structure. As even the title of the book makes clear, his main interest concerns *macroscopic* actions—actions that are not confined to the immediate lifeworld of everyday actors but that are part of powerful political, economic, or military activities. In the same sense that actions may be macroscopic, one should not understand, according to Etzioni, societies as systems in the sense of self-regulating entities that transcend completely the level of human action.

His focus on macroscopic action distinguishes Etzioni very clearly from a series of competitors. He is not content with a merely microsociological study of human action or with a merely

macrosociological study of societal processes disconnected from human subjectivity. Nor does he accept the conventional attempts of several traditions of social scientific theorizing to bridge the gaps between micro and macro and between action and structure: macroscopic action is not a mere aggregation of individual actions as in the prototype of economic theorizing about markets; macroscopic action is not the self-realization of a suprapersonal entity like the “nation” or the “proletarian class”—assumptions which played such an important role for right-wing and left-wing Hegelianisms and their totalitarian repercussions. The theory of macroscopic action deals with the conditions for the formation of a collective will and for the organization of collective action. It does not assume a priori that a collective will exists at all or can come about under all conditions; it keeps a distance from the ascription of actor-like qualities to non-personal entities without losing sight of the possibility that human beings join together in common endeavors.

This orientation toward the conditions for the formation of collective action on a macroscopic level also provided Etzioni with a sober point of departure for the social-scientific use of biological and cybernetic systems theory. There is a long-standing controversy between those who defend a merely “analytical” understanding of “systems” (i.e., an understanding that declares systems theory a mere analytical tool without inherent assumptions about the world), and those who proclaim an “essentialist” understanding (i.e., an understanding that the world truly has the qualities that systems theories underline)—and between these different attitudes Etzioni has steered a reasonable middle course, defending the use of systems models if and only if we have empirical reasons to apply them. This approach should be called a “realistic” understanding of systems theory. This is how Etzioni himself put it:

‘Constituting a system’ is treated as a proposition subject to empirical test; any two units do not necessarily form a system. When the actors are less related, when there is no feedback effect or only a sporadic and inconsequential one, we shall refer to the relationship as a “situation.” Societal units, we suggest, often ‘behave’ as if they were linked in a system fashion. We have a system, for instance, if a civil-rights movement activates northern liberals who form one of the groups that affect federal action, which, in turn, affects white southerners who affect the civil-rights movement, including

its relations with northern liberals. But unlike the analytic system, which is composed of variables, this system is composed of collectivities, organizations, movements, and government agencies.... We thus use, to some extent, concepts similar to those which societal actors use, perceive, and to which they respond.... In short, it makes the theory itself more active.

This passage demonstrates perfectly how Etzioni's orientation toward collective action informs even his methodological views. Since many important figures in social theory—from Parsons to Habermas and Luhmann—have often fallen into the trap of interpreting analytically introduced “systems” in essentialist ways, it would have saved sociology several detours if Etzioni's methodological view had been shared by others and become dominant.

Etzioni's interest in collective action and his “realistic” understanding of systems mechanisms is also responsible for his attitude with respect to intentional social change. Again he tried to steer a middle course, this time between the evolutionist assumptions that permeate a large part of the sociological tradition, including modernization theory, and the overly voluntarist character of much political science at that time. The mere fact that Etzioni attempted to clarify systematically the conditions for intentional social change made his theory of action on a macro-scale look to many—particularly when the state-oriented reform euphoria in most Western democracies was over—to be a prototypical representative of “the best and the brightest” and their naive belief in the possibilities of state planning and regulation. Taking seriously the mere title of the book would have helped to avoid such a gross misunderstanding. Etzioni never spoke of “the active state” but rather of “the active society,” thereby emphasizing an increase of agency on the side of a decentralized plurality of individual and collective actors and the possibilities lying in their coordination and cooperation. Like Alain Touraine and Daniel Bell, who invented the terms “programmed society” and “postindustrial society” in order to characterize the new type of societies they saw emerging as a consequence of a dramatic increase in cybernetic capacities, Etzioni chose a new term and spoke—indeed much earlier than Lyotard and his fashionable followers—of “postmodernity” in order to characterize the consequences of the radical transformation of the technologies of communication, knowledge, and energy in the post-World War II era.

Achieving Consensus

As important as these conceptual distinctions and methodological decisions may be, the true richness of Etzioni's work lies in its substantive sociological chapters. Etzioni concentrates on three main resources which are said to be crucial for collective action: knowledge, power, and consensus. His attempt to analyze "knowledge as a societal factor" was innovative at the time. Knowledge was not reduced to pre-given social interests, but studied in its importance for efficient organization and self-guidance. Etzioni analyzed knowledge not only as a property of individuals, but also of collectivities like organizations that are considered to be in a permanent learning process.

The focus on action also influenced the chapters in his work that Etzioni dedicated to a theory of power. Power for him is neither given and distributed as a resource for the attempts to find obedience in others, nor is it considered an inherent quality of agency as such. The task of a theory of power for Etzioni is rather to study the ways in which resources are put to use in action. Individuals or organizations with fewer resources, but a higher ingenuity in their use, can achieve superiority over others who are not able to gain similar advantage from their larger amount of resources.

Even more valuable than the elaboration of Etzioni's theories of knowledge and of power is his contribution to the understanding of the role of consensus for efficient collective action. Information (knowledge) and power alone cannot be sufficient for collective action, at least not in the long run, because a strategy of collective action can easily fail if it collides with the goals, convictions, or values of other actors. What Etzioni has in mind here goes beyond a mere emphasis on the unavoidability of compromise and the wisdom of leadership. The important thing for him is not only the mediation between existing goals, but the transformation, by means of creative thinking, of the existing strategic goals of the different individual and collective actors into a commonly acceptable new goal.

Etzioni distinguishes three different ways in which such a consensus can emerge. "Consensus-formation" is the process "by which the perspectives of the members of a societal unit are transmitted upward to the controlling overlayers." We might think about the role of

intraorganizational democracy as an example here. The opposite process is called “consensus-mobilization,” a term that refers to “processes by which society-wide perspectives are transmitted downward from the controlling overlayers to the members.” Here the ability of leaders to find acceptance for their vision comes to mind. When both the upward and downward processes come together, Etzioni speaks about “consensus-building,” and he makes it abundantly clear that he finds this option the most desirable. If this integrative type of consensus-building is combined with a creative use of knowledge and power resources, successful collective action on a macroscopic level becomes possible.

In a brief summary like this all such theoretical moves sound more abstract and arbitrary than they actually are in Etzioni’s book, which itself is thoroughly impregnated with empirical knowledge. To prevent this wrong impression from arising, one would have to add empirical applications and illustrations. In the present context, two short remarks must suffice. One is simply pointing to the fact that Etzioni analyzes processes of the *emergence* of consensus; he does not presuppose consensus as given nor does he consider it “open to manipulation by charismatic leadership and/or the mass media.” Consensus for him is an achievement that has to be reached through creative efforts. Consider then the frequent insinuation from critics of communitarianism that Etzioni’s thinking is based on an underestimation of, or a negative attitude toward, “difference” and “plurality.” In fact, as shown, the opposite is true! The processes of consensus-building presuppose and allow for difference and plurality, but in ways that are as far from an imposition of consensus as they are from an understanding of difference in which all tension is eliminated. Such a weakening of tension occurs if none of the parties any longer feels bound to that which is specifically its own, none experiences the other as a potentially salutary provocation, a stimulus for serious self-transformation.

The other remark is related to Etzioni’s notions of “responsiveness” and to the fact that his theories and his conceptual apparatus are not value-neutral. The notion of responsiveness plays an important role in his theorizing concerning the emergence of consensus. It opens the analysis of these processes to the needs of individuals. If leaders ignore the needs of their followers completely, the leaders become unresponsive; if they simply heed their followers’ declared needs, the

leaders become totally responsive and cannot pursue a consistent strategy, since preferences may fluctuate over time and hence destroy long-term plans. For Etzioni the followers have to have responsiveness as well: they have to understand the conditions and constraints under which their leaders are acting. What we find here is again a very sophisticated set of assumptions about the efficiency of organizations enhanced by a value-orientation to the fulfillment of human needs.

Universal Needs?

What these needs are is certainly not sufficiently spelled out in the book under discussion. In an age in which cultural relativism often has the upper hand when human needs are debated, such an attitude is easily dismissed as naive, outdated, or even dangerous. If one dug deeper, however, one would possibly be able to identify implicit assumptions about human needs in all social-scientific work. Etzioni had and has the courage to make his assumptions explicit. His key proposition in this context is “that the flexibility of basic human needs is limited in that they can be more readily and fully satisfied in some societal structures than in others. Thus, some societal structures, as a whole, are less responsive and more alienating than others, and there are significant limits to the manipulability of the members.”

The details of this list—including the needs for affection, recognition, context, and repeated gratification, and, on a second level, stability in the sense of expectability, and variance in the sense of appropriate roles for differing personalities—are of lesser interest here than the fact that Etzioni set out at all to specify the anthropological universals on which his theory of macroscopic action is based. In the long and clearly normative epilogue to the book, Etzioni, inspired by existentialist ways of thinking, sketched a conception of inauthenticity which provided him with a skeptical distance from mere facades of democratic consensus and the accompanying feelings not of powerlessness, but of manipulation. Thus his reconstruction of the emergence of consensus and of the formation of collective actions differs from a mere “pluralism” conceived of as the free interplay of pluralist forces. The orientation toward authenticity is inherently related to a participatory understanding of politics since “ultimately, there is no way for a societal structure to discover the members’ needs and adapt to them without the participation of the members in shaping and reshaping the structure.” The question here is how a reflexive

notion like “authenticity” has to be understood in relation to assumptions about, on one hand, the universality of human needs and, on the other, the universal validity of the democratic ideal.

There is one further aspect in which *The Active Society* prefigured later developments of sociological theory. Sociological theory has for a long time tacitly identified the abstract notion of “society” with the concrete reality of the “nation-state.” The ensuing concentration on endogenous factors of social change is one of the birth defects of the discipline. Etzioni, for whom the foundation of the state of Israel is one of his crucial biographical experiences, and who is deeply formed by his studies about the nuclear arms race and by the protest movement against the Vietnam War, clearly never shared this historical narrow-mindedness. His book developed the basic lines of an argument in which the unifying effects of rising interdependence are sketched out in order to open a vista for self-guidance on a global scale. What could be more important in an age that has accepted the word “globalization” as a catchword for a large part of its hopes and for many aspects of its malaise?

One of the primary reasons to present here the outlines of Etzioni’s contribution to general social theory has been to compensate a little bit for the neglect this work has experienced in the field of social theory over the last 30 years. But this neglect does not only affect the history of the social scientific disciplines; it even affects the development of the public philosophy called communitarianism. Relating the theory of macroscopic action to communitarian thought could be fruitful for both sides, but, ironically enough, nobody, not even the author himself of this theory and spiritus rector of the communitarian movement, has really tried to establish this connection yet.

The Apolitics of Community (in an Era without Politics)

Dennis H. Wrong

Robert Nisbet ended his review of Amitai Etzioni's 1968 book *The Active Society* with the comment that "like a good major league shortstop, he knows how to go both ways, to his right and to his left." I am delighted by the baseball metaphor, but the remark was not exactly meant as praise. The late Nisbet was just about the only truly classical conservative in sociology at that time (or since) and his *American Sociological Review* piece, laced with heavy irony, described Etzioni's book as a work of eschatology in conformity with the New Left and countercultural spirit of protest so visible in that fateful year of 1968. "For those who prefer *counter*-eschatological sociology," Nisbet wrote, "I recommend going back to one or two of Etzioni's earlier works. He is a talented mind...."

The book was indeed dedicated to "The Active Ones, in particular my students at Columbia and at Berkeley," the two universities that were the sites of the most extreme and publicized student revolts. The dedication page also included a mother-daughter dialogue quoted from *The New York Times* in which the daughter defended "flower children [who] believe in love, beauty, peace, understanding, freedom, sharing and helping each other [and] are trying to change the world with these ideas." The mother stodgily replied that "the flower children and the hippies are not creative persons, are not really doing anything useful." *O tempora, o mores*. How long ago it all seems! Yet Etzioni's book, if shrewdly attuned to the zeitgeist of the moment, was much more than a tract for the times, living up fully to its subtitle "A Theory of Societal and Political Processes." Over 650 pages in length, it summarized, expanded upon, and added to major themes of his earlier work and remains today his major theoretical statement, the

subject of positive appraisal by several leading sociological theorists at a session of the American Sociological Association a few years ago.

Like nearly everyone else, Etzioni overestimated the depth and duration of the youthful protest movements of the late sixties. But it is not to his discredit that he tried to link his theorizing—which obviously long predated those movements—to what was dominating the political and cultural worlds at the time. In this respect he was then, and still is today, a “public intellectual,” a type whose relative disappearance is regularly bemoaned these days. I confess I dislike the term, thinking it redundant: “intellectual” *tout court*, coined at the time of the Dreyfus Affair, has always connoted persons who went beyond their own fields of specialized knowledge to make pronouncements, often of a prophetic nature, on the state of the world and the direction of politics and history. The anti-Drefusards objected that “*les intellectuels*” were presumptuous bystanders who thought that because they were experts in one scientific or cultural field their opinions on any and all public issues had a special weight. Etzioni, having written books on arms control, space exploration, genetic engineering, and economics, as well as articles on a large variety of other subjects, has been accused of such presumption, but, be that as it may, it clearly does not apply to *The Active Society* nor to his contributions to the communitarian movement, whose major themes are obviously congruent with his own academic discipline of sociology.

Grounding a Movement: Part Substance, Part Timing

The communitarian appeal grows out of approaches that have been central to sociology since its foundation as a university discipline in the late 19th century. Etzioni has been an activist intellectual in his leadership of the movement, editorship of its journal, and authorship of his most recent books on the movement’s major themes. And as in the late sixties, he has displayed a sense of timeliness: founded in the early 1990s, both the Communitarian Network and this journal address an American society in which political deadlock, apathy, and a fairly vacuous centrism prevail in national politics, a condition that has existed since the decline of the New Deal Democratic majority in the Reagan years. Their foundation also coincides with the end of the Cold War, which had provided a national purpose of sorts for over

four decades despite having become a somewhat taken-for-granted permanent condition.

Into the resultant ideological vacuum have stepped various theorists of community. That the social transformations of the last two hundred years have led to a “loss of community”—a decline in the close and durable social bonds of small, relatively homogeneous, self-sufficient territorial communities—has been so standard a theme of sociology that its fullest and most direct version, the historical passage from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, has been taken into English-language sociology without translation from the German. From there it has even diffused to a wider public: there was a disco bar on the upper West Side of Manhattan a few years ago called “*Gemeinschaft*.” Predictably, Etzioni and the communitarian movement have drawn criticism for allegedly indulging in the only too familiar lamentations that the late Christopher Lasch dubbed *Gemeinschaftschmerz*.

Communitarians, including Etzioni, occasionally strike this note, but in general they are not guilty of waxing nostalgic over an idealized vanished past. Their major emphasis, no less grounded in sociology, is quite different and realistically conscious of basic conditions of modern life that are unlikely to change. Moreover, far from stressing the security and deep satisfactions of the world we have lost, Etzioni in the very title of his most recent book (*The New Golden Rule: Community and Morality in a Democratic Society*) proclaims his concern with the *moral obligations* that community imposes on its members. Here too he reflects his sociological heritage. A major emphasis of classical sociology was its identification of normative consensus as the foundation of social solidarity, the social cement that makes society itself possible and holds it together. Paradoxically, Etzioni’s earlier work on the sociology of complex organizations and on social power and political mobilization was valuable for its qualification of the widely perceived overemphasis on the normative in the work of Durkheim and Parsons. Etzioni saw normative commitment achieved through moral persuasion as one of three bases for social relations and the exercise of social power, the other two being coercion and utilitarian material or nonmaterial interest. His communitarianism, however, stresses the importance of the normative, of a voluntary moral order based on “core values” that is partially independent of state coercion and market exchange.

Etzioni also repudiates the oversocialized conception of human nature which sociologists have been accused of holding. In *The New Golden Rule*, he not only explicitly rejects this conception, but he accords individual autonomy equal status with community, presenting the former as both a need and a value in modern society. But some sociologists who have accepted the oversocialization critique have tended to affirm a radical “creative” individualism that comes close to denying altogether the reality (and necessity) of socialization as the internalization of collective values in individual character. Etzioni, however, recognizes that individuals acquire a “moral voice” that is in part an inner voice corresponding to Freud’s conception of the super-ego and in part “an expression of the community to which they belong.” He suggests that there is an autonomy-community continuum on which societies and historical eras can be located and that there is a “golden mean” that gives both their due. The conviction that in the present period we have strayed too far towards the autonomy end of the continuum is clearly the rationale, the very *raison d’etre*, for the communitarian movement.

Fellow Plumbers of the Zeitgeist

Unsurprisingly, there is an affinity between communitarianism and several other current intellectual-political tendencies, for they are influenced by the same zeitgeist. Social conservatives bemoaning the alleged moral decline of the nation since the sixties strike some of the same notes, although the communitarians have avoided their more rabid jeremiads. Several moderate conservatives have associated themselves with the communitarian movement. Etzioni, to his credit, has noted what he calls the “curl back” in the rates for most forms of social pathology that had been rising since the sixties, a trend that has continued up to the present and that the more extreme conservative moralists (such as Bennett and Bork) have ignored. The neo-Tocquevillian advocates of “civil society” are also plowing much the same furrow as the communitarians in voicing alarm over the decline of civility in America and in the membership of voluntary associations. And on the left the partisans of multiculturalism, in their commitment to a politics of identity, also extol community—albeit at the level of racial, ethnic, and gender subgroups within the larger society.

There is an apolitical flavor to all of these tendencies, although they are commonly regarded as political movements or perspectives. Strident proclamations of “family values” usually are more symbolic and expressive than committed to substantive public policies or legislative programs (apart from minor changes like eliminating the “marriage penalty” in tax law). The upholders of civil society are concerned with the implications for democracy of the presence or absence of a thriving nonpolitical social structure of “intermediate” groups. Unfortunately, as political scientist Sheri Berman has shown, the existence of such a social infrastructure in Weimar Germany was unable to prevent its collapse with the coming to power of Hitler and may even have facilitated it. As for identity politics, its partisans have specifically asserted the primacy of social identities shaped by membership of groups into which one is born, at the expense of “universalist” commitments to the larger heterogeneous society. (One exception to this apolitical nature would be the militant conservatives who wish to recriminalize behavior, most notably abortion, that was decriminalized in the wake of the sixties.)

It is worth noting that generally the above-mentioned political-intellectual ‘schools’ concentrate on a single level of social life: the family in the case of the social conservatives, the intermediate-level institutions in the case of the neo-Tocquevillians and the multiculturalists. In contrast, by affirming a “community of communities” as the goal of the communitarian movement, Etzioni clearly remains sensitive to the different levels of social life and social relations in modern society. In fact, a major contribution of *The Active Society* was its specification of the different levels and social units—micro and macro—that are involved in social and political mobilization. Since that book, other analysts have added a “meso” or middle level to the micro/macro distinction.

Community in the abstract is equivalent to the fraternity extolled in the famous French revolutionary slogan of liberty, equality, fraternity. It is a property of any and all groups, political or nonpolitical, micro, meso, or macro. A few critics have, accordingly, complained of the avoidance of real but divisive political issues by the communitarian movement, arguing that it strives to be all things to all people. In this, however, it is indisputably a child of its times, times that are conservative not in the current ideological sense, but in the literal

sense of resisting major politically-directed change of any kind, right or left in orientation. As Nicholas Lemann has observed, "The consensus right now is not to have a consensus about what the country as a whole should be or do." No large national purpose in either domestic or foreign policy animates present-day politics since the end of the New Deal Democratic majority, the Cold War, and the Republican "counter-revolution" of 1994. It is hard to see under these conditions just what the communitarian movement would gain by committing itself to a comprehensive program of reform that would provoke opposition without overcoming the prevailing apathy and flaccid centrism. Perhaps its major function is that of keeping alive a spirit of commitment to larger goals transcending self and narrow group interests until the day when such a spirit is once again needed to confront real and urgent national opportunities and crises.

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From Compliance to Community in the Works of Amitai Etzioni

Edward W. Lehman

Amitai Etzioni's immense body of work covers the last five decades of our century and may tempt observers to exaggerate differences between the "young" and the more "mature" Etzioni. (His first book, *Diary of a Commando Soldier*, was published in Israel in 1952, before he came to the United States for graduate work in sociology.) Yet, despite seemingly abrupt shifts in subject matter, his accomplishments are marked far more by continuity than by disjuncture.

In this paper, I highlight this continuity by pointing out the common threads that link his first major book, *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations*, to his most recent one, *The New Golden Rule*. On the surface these two books appear to come from entirely dissimilar theoretical universes. The former, published in 1961, is an academic, apparently "value free," *tour de force* that extends Weberian and Mertonian analyses of bureaucracies by contrasting their social structures via such "hard headed" factors as power and compliance; the latter, published in 1996, is a bold exercise in "normative" (*viz.*, prescriptive) theory that advocates greater individual and collective responsibilities by underscoring the availability of shared moral understandings. Closer inspection, however, reveals complementary "moral" concerns and reliance on similar theoretical tools. It also rebuts the criticism, presented most recently by Steven Lukes in *Dissent* magazine, that Etzioni's communitarianism represents a soberly high-minded but basically unrealistic strategy for a world riven by economic exploitation and irreducible social conflicts.

When *Comparative Analysis* was published, the study of complex organizations (or bureaucracies or institutions, in other scholars'

parlance) was at the cutting edge of sociological analysis even more so than today. An explanation of why this was so is beyond this paper's scope; but, in light of my objective here, let me stress that the factors transcend the disciplinary exigencies of sociology in the early sixties. Organizations were (and are) seen as essential ingredients of modernity. (Weber, for instance, believed that bureaucratization defined the contemporary world and that its manifestations in premodern times were extremely rare, e.g., in pharaonic Egypt, the medieval papacy, and the mandarin administration of imperial China.) Since organizations permeate virtually every aspect of our lives, sociologists—heady with post-World War II optimism—puzzled over how these “social machines with human parts” could be made not only more effective and efficient but also more responsive to staff and “clients” and more congenial with a democratic culture.

By the late 1950s, a younger generation of organizational sociologists believed the time had come to confront these questions by bringing together case studies and ambitious theorizing to zero in on the systematic differences among the diverse range of units classified as complex organizations. Theoretically informed comparisons were seen as essential because common-sense labels such as, for instance, hospital, mental health facility, prison, and labor union cannot do the job of rendering what is going on in such social units. “Comparative analysis” became the order of the day, and no formulation has had a more abiding impact than Etzioni's organizational sociology. Theoretical rigor alone does not account for the success of his “compliance model.” Its influence also stems from the fact it is not a parochial exercise in organizational theory but embodies the pivotal *societal* concerns of those whom today we call classic sociological theorists, particularly Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and Parsons. (Three of Etzioni's teachers at Berkeley—Reinhard Bendix, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Philip Selznick—have had related concerns with the embeddedness of organizations in larger societal and historical contexts. Moreover, Selznick has followed a route similar to, although independent of, Etzioni's—from organizational studies to communitarianism.)

Like the classic sociological theorists, Etzioni assigns a key place to *social structures* (patterns of relationships produced and reproduced by individual and collective actors who are members of a social unit). And, especially following Weber, he grasps that a nuanced under-

standing of *power* (the ability of an actor in a relationship to attain goals despite resistance) is fundamental to understanding organizational and societal structures. Power is central for Etzioni because it shapes both the means by which a social unit is able to advance its goals and hence maintain or transform itself, and the extent to which participants can be mobilized to perform and contribute creatively. In Etzioni's communitarian theory these two dimensions are to be formally christened as the linked problems of *order* and *autonomy*.

A Typology of Compliance

The decisive basis of comparison in Etzioni's *compliance* model is how organizational needs and wants are reconciled with what participants would prefer to do. Specifically, it directs our attention to the kinds of *power* exercised primarily by elites as they pursue organizational goals (and, in his later terminology, "order" more generally); and the kinds of *involvement* different forms of power elicit from lower participants (who try to retain some autonomy). Etzioni argues that organizational arrangements that may foster effectiveness and efficiency (and implicitly, responsiveness and democracy as well) in one compliance structure will not do so in all others. Economic incentives, for example, may successfully induce workers to make greater contributions in a typical American business organization but fall flat when mobilizing community activists, Trappist monks, or prisoners of war.

Etzioni assumes that power is more than simple "coercion" (conceived broadly as compelling people to do what they would not do otherwise). He posits three analytically distinct types of power: (1) *coercive power* (conceived more narrowly), which rests on the control of physical sanctions that can do violence to people's bodies or psyches; (2) *remunerative power*, which springs from control over material rewards such as goods, services, property, and income; and (3) *normative power*, which derives from the command of symbolic rewards and deprivations, the most universal of which are prestige, esteem, acceptance, and love.

Etzioni posits that compliance's other dimension—involvement—similarly contains three analytical types. Lower participants' actions are marked by *alienative*, *calculative*, or *moral* involvements. "Alien-

ative involvement,” he notes in *Comparative Analysis*, “designates an intense negative orientation.... Inmates in prisons, prisoners of war, people in concentration camps, enlisted men in basic training, all tend to be alienated from their respective organizations.” He defines calculative involvement as “either a negative or positive orientation of low intensity” and views the prevailing mood as “what’s in it for me.” Etzioni suggests that calculative involvement characterizes not only the dispositions of workers under advanced capitalism but of most managers, traders, and entrepreneurs, too. Finally, he states, “Moral involvement designates a positive orientation of high intensity,” and points to the commitment of parishioners to their church and activists to their party as typical examples.

While the combination of power and involvement logically yields nine possible compliance structures, Etzioni rivets attention on three “congruent” types: (1) *coercive compliance*, the joining of coercive power and alienative involvement; (2) *utilitarian compliance*, the combination of remunerative power and calculative involvement; and (3) *normative compliance*, the linking of normative power with moral involvement. Etzioni’s spotlighting of these three is not the gimmicky heuristic device other theorists sometimes resort to when reasserting command over a conceptual apparatus that threatens to run amok. Rather his reduction is premised on a “dynamic hypothesis” regarding the interplay of power and involvement that anchors not only his comparison of organizations but informs his subsequent work. The dynamic hypothesis states:

...Congruent types are more effective than incongruent types. Organizations are under pressure to be effective. Hence...*organizations tend to shift their compliance structures from incongruent to congruent types and organizations which have congruent compliance structures tend to resist factors pushing them toward incongruent compliance structures.*

Congruence is achieved by a shift in either the power wielded by elites or the involvement of lower participants. Coercive power to implement *order goals* (controlling so-called deviants by segregating them from the rest of society—not to be confused with the *problem of order* in Etzioni’s subsequent communitarianism) is most effective when dealing with lower participants who are highly alienated (e.g., inmates of traditional prisons or custodial mental hospitals); remu-

nerative power to achieve *production goals* (creating goods and services that are supplied to “outsiders”) works best in the context of calculative involvement by lower participants (e.g., assembly-line workers); and normative power to obtain *cultural goals* (creating, preserving, and transmitting cultural objects like beliefs, values, and expressive symbols) operates most smoothly when lower participants are morally involved (e.g., graduate students, members of social-movement organizations, patients in intensive psychotherapy).

To Coerce or Not to Coerce

A surface reading of *Comparative Analysis* may leave the erroneous impression that Etzioni (at this stage) feels that coercive, utilitarian, and normative compliance are moral equivalents and that no one of them is superior to the others; our organizational society, after all, depends on all three, and which one organizations should implement depends on what they want to accomplish. Closer reading, however, discloses normative compliance’s privileged position.

To begin with, this unstated preference for normative compliance is rooted in the very logic of Etzioni’s comparative analysis. Since organizations’ compliance structures do not coincide with their taken-for-granted identities (and may contradict them), he goes to particularly great lengths to emphasize that mental hospitals and prisons can be either coercive or normative and labor unions occur in all three categories. Even what such organizations claim to do often is not corroborated by study of their actual compliance structures. Prison systems that advertise themselves as being in the rehabilitation business often operate as coercive organizations whose real goal is to incarcerate “social undesirables.” Some mental hospitals that trumpet a therapeutic agenda are in reality closer to prisons pursuing order goals. And many labor unions officially advocating workers’ rights (and normative compliance) are either really built around “delivering the goods” (and hence utilitarian compliance) or are linked to organized crime (and thus coercive compliance).

These pivotal examples are an implicit acknowledgment (which actually runs throughout the book) that, *ceteris paribus*, normative compliance represents the most humane way to control and to build commitments. Normative compliance is essential for organizations

whose intent is to buttress or transform participants' inner selves. These organizations see lower participants as *ends* and not just means. In such circumstances, normative power is most effective because it alone is capable of penetrating people's interior dispositions; the efficacy of the other forms of power rests merely on the successful manipulation of external, "objective" rewards and punishments. Moral involvement is essential when treating people as subjects whose capacities for thinking, evaluating, feeling, and choosing are at the core of an organization's agenda.

In short, Etzioni implicitly advocates the superiority of normative compliance. In effect, he is not just saying that organizations such as prisons, mental hospitals, and unions ought to be marked by normative compliance. His book indicates that schools, churches, and voluntary associations should also adopt such structures. Moreover, by extension, he is suggesting that *all* social units (and not just organizations) which strive to treat their members as the ends of action and not merely as cogs in a social machine should adopt normative compliance. (The view that people must *always* be treated as more than means to others' ends, of course, becomes a defining feature of Etzioni's communitarianism.) Normative compliance is the best structure, not only for satisfying the highest collective goals and needs, but also for displaying the greatest respect for participants as authentic subjects of I-Thou rather than I-It relations (to use the language of Etzioni's first mentor, Martin Buber).

Comparative Analysis contains brief discussions of a subtype of normative compliance, the *social normative*, which is less pivotal to that inquiry because it occurs most commonly in "horizontal" primary groups (rather than "hierarchical" secondary units); hence it was largely overlooked by commentators at the time. Based on *social power* and *social involvement*, it tends to occur more in peer relations than does "pure" normative compliance. Social power rests on the ability to reward and punish by wielding acceptance and positive responses; and social involvement depends on participants' commitments to primary groups and their members. Social normative compliance is organizationally important, however, in accounting for the "collegial" relations among the professional staffs of professional organizations. It assumes strategic significance later in clarifying the role of "moral dialogues" and the "moral voice" in Etzioni's communitarianism.

The Move from Organizations to Society

This privileged position of both types of normative compliance, however, does not become an integral feature of his theorizing until *The Active Society*. Published amidst the tumult of the late sixties, that book is as relentlessly focused on social structure as *Comparative Analysis* and employs many of the same categories. It raises the level of analysis, however, from organizations to society. Organizations like the state, political parties, labor unions, business corporations, churches, etc., are still pivotal actors; but Etzioni's concern shifts to how they foster or impair the prospects for "societal transformation." More significantly, *The Active Society* assumes an overtly normative (i.e., prescriptive) stance with its focus on how to move societies to ever higher levels of activation.

The Active Society is perhaps Etzioni's most notable scholarly attainment but it is not at the hub of this paper. I focus on it here because it illuminates the transition from his earlier compliance model to his later concerns with the "moral dimension," especially moral dialogues and the moral voice. It shares a core problematic with *Comparative Analysis*: the relationship between governing elites and the commitments of those they govern (and implicitly the theme of balancing order and autonomy). But it broadens our understanding of both elite power and lower participant involvement. Elite capacities must be weighed by more than their ability to constrain, induce, or persuade the governed. There are now rich analyses of how the knowledge, consciousness, and commitment capacities of societal elites also affect their ability to transform and guide. Moreover, the problem of involvement is translated into the question of consensus-formation structures. Lower participants' contributions are now explicitly no longer just reactions to elite power. Consensus formation structures must be "responsive" and non-elites must have a share of power, a sense of efficacy, and reduced alienation. In short, consensus formation amounts to normative compliance on a societal, more fully developed, realistic scale. When societies rely too heavily on utilitarian or coercive compliance, the grounding for a more "active society" erodes.

The Moral Voice Emerges

In *The Moral Dimension*, Etzioni, in a stinging critique of neoclassical economics, concentrates on the relevance of normative compliance in molding both individual actions and societal order. While not abandoning social-structural considerations, Etzioni now gives cultural factors equal weight. Moral evaluations are irreducible features of both action and order, he argues, and cannot be conflated with the pleasure principle or self-interest. Action “in line with one’s moral values” he argues, “produces a kind of satisfaction, a sense of moral worth...of *affirmation* of having done what is required....” Along with affective elements, morals are the most important bases for individual choices; “logical/empirical considerations” play only a secondary role. Indeed, Etzioni rejects neoclassical economics’ assertion that market principles are a sufficient basis for social order. Market competition, unless “encapsulated,” will “escalate into destructive, all out conflict.” The final section of *The Moral Dimension* explores the normative, social, and governmental ingredients of a societal “capsule” that is strong enough to contain competition without undermining its positive contributions.

This heightened emphasis on the moral bases of autonomous actions and social order has led Etzioni to communitarianism and reflects his deepening appreciation of normative compliance. While *The Moral Dimension* still visibly displays the influence of *The Active Society* (most notably in its detailed discussion of the positive role of government power), by the time one gets to *The New Golden Rule* the transition is complete. The focus is now more on the content of moral principles and less on formal hierarchic mechanisms of compliance. Etzioni argues that a “good society,” in its search for shared core values, privileges neither individual predilections (*autonomy*) nor the common good (*order*) but seeks a judicious balance of the two, a balance of rights and responsibilities. Moreover, he believes that we are capable of moral dialogues in the face of seemingly divergent values. These dialogues are the most effective means for locating shared values because they are not just rational deliberations, i.e., not just based on “ground rules” that allow social life to go on. These dialogues are capable of defining the “good,” Etzioni says, without lapsing into “culture wars” only when certain rules are followed.

Moral dialogue as the preferred source of shared values is complemented by the moral voice as the most effective foundation for compliance. The moral voice is a type of normative compliance and springs not from the pleasure principle or self-interest but from the quest for *affirmation*, originally identified in *The Moral Dimension*. As presented in *The New Golden Rule*, the moral voice has two sources: the inner, personal voice—"what the person believes the shared values ought to be, based on education, experience, and internal development"; and the communal voice—"the moral voice of others [these persons] care about, those to whom they are affectively attached—members of their community." In short, it is *social normative compliance*, which, as mentioned earlier, is only lightly touched on in *Comparative Analysis*. Now it has moved to center stage. Although not rejected, the relative efficacy of the hierarchical formal (coercive, utilitarian, and "pure" normative) compliance structures of Etzioni's organizational theory is now in the background, eclipsed by the unique advantages of horizontal communal (*viz.*, social normative) compliance.

The communitarian Etzioni is unequivocal in touting the superiority of the moral voice over more alienating forms of compliance. Informal, persuasive control is a surer guide to identifying and complying with shared values than officially sanctioned measures, regardless of whether the latter are coercive, utilitarian, or even "pure" normative. The same logic must apply to the intra-communal, national, and international spheres because he rejects the notion that each community is its own final moral arbiter and not accountable to others. Of course, on these macro levels, the forms the moral dialogues assume (dubbed "megalogues"), and how moral voices are raised, inevitably take on a more formalized character; but their substances are unaltered.

The call for moral dialogues and moral voices undoubtedly has contributed to the aforementioned criticism that Etzioni's communitarianism is sober and high-minded but basically unrealistic. A case can be made that *The New Golden Rule* has stressed social normative compliance too much, and that all three forms of hierarchic compliance warrant more emphasis in complex, modern societies if one truly wants to balance order and autonomy effectively. But this charge does appear a touch ironic in light of the interests in power and alienation that run from *Comparative Analysis*, through *The Active Society*, to *The*

Moral Dimension, and remain implicit subtexts in *The New Golden Rule*. Nevertheless, the more “hard headed” foci of earlier, less “cultural” writings do receive more muted expression in the latest book. Perhaps no relatively slim volume can be expected to balance all of a thinker’s agendas.

Fortunately, the more one follows the unifying thread of compliance, the more one appreciates that not only is there no inherent contradiction between the early and more recent works, but there are solid reasons for claiming that the latter builds on the former. It may be too much to ask Etzioni to provide such an explicit synthesis in light of all his current projects. It is more realistic to urge that other scholars explore these linkages. And it is most appropriate to suggest that Etzioni’s critics should ponder the full body of his work and how concerns with power, alienation, and compliance have led him, perhaps ineluctably, to communitarianism.

Give Us the Good Stuff

“The Dutch Health Ministry said it would extend an experiment to distribute free heroin to hard-core drug addicts after a three-month pilot scheme showed not serious, undesired side-effects. However, some heroin users complained about the quality of the heroin offered.”

New York Times, November 25, 1998

THE PARTICULARS

The Rules of Engagement and the Argument Culture

Deborah Tannen

I recently published a book entitled *The Argument Culture*, in which I explore how our entire society—in particular the press, politics, and law—has become increasingly adversarial in spirit and form. The argument culture, I show, urges us to approach the world, and the people in it, in an adversarial frame of mind. It rests on the assumption that opposition is the best way to get anything done: the best way to discuss an idea is to set up a debate; the best way to cover news is to find spokespeople who express the most extreme, polarized views and present them as “both sides”; the best way to settle disputes is litigation that pits one party against the other; the best way to begin an essay is to attack someone; and the best way to show you are really thinking is to criticize.

In the book, I claim that though the battle metaphor can be useful in many instances—obviously, there are situations in which a debate is the best way to explore a topic, and there are issues that clearly have two and only two sides—we are now over-applying it. By conceptualizing every issue as a battle between two sides, we ignore nuances, discredit the middle ground where most people place themselves, and give credence to extreme and even discredited views. For example, those who deny that the Holocaust ever happened are able to gain

media attention by masquerading as the other side in a debate. Among the unfortunate results are the obscuring of information as well as potential solutions, a widespread cynicism that keeps citizens home on election day, and a corrosive adversarial spirit that invades our daily interactions with each other.

In response to this book, a journalist asked me, “Are there any signs that the argument culture is changing?” Among the signs of hope I mentioned was the communitarian movement, and in particular the work of Amitai Etzioni—and its warm reception.

In my book, I drew on Etzioni’s *New Golden Rule* in suggesting what can be done to counteract the adversarial spirit and deepening polarization that threaten our culture—themes that have concerned him for so many years. I briefly listed several of the “rules of engagement for values talk” that Etzioni discusses at length. The ones I listed are

- Do not demonize those with whom you disagree.
- Do not affront their deepest moral commitments.
- Talk less of rights, which are non-negotiable, and more of needs, wants, and interests.
- Leave some issues out.
- Engage in a dialogue of convictions: Do not be so reasonable and conciliatory that you lose touch with a core of belief you feel passionately about.

One woman who wrote to tell me that she liked my book singled out for praise these rules of engagement. She said she would share them with everyone she knew, as they offered a concrete way to change the tone of discourse in everyday life.

The rules of engagement epitomize Etzioni’s combination of deep insight, humane values, and practical proposals. Two points he makes in discussing his rules of engagement illustrate these qualities.

Etzioni looks beneath surfaces. He notes, for example, that instant polling, which might seem at first to be as democratic as you can get, is actually the opposite:

The last thing a democracy needs is for people to vote their raw feelings, their first impulses, before having a chance to

reflect on them and discuss them with others. Hence, it is highly undesirable to expose people to a new idea, policy, or speech and ask them to vote on it immediately, as media polling currently often does. A much more *democratic* model would result if one required at least a day's delay before the vote is taken, enabling people to discuss the matter with their families, neighbors or coworkers, people they carpool with, and so on.

Reading this, I thought of John Dewey's observation, "Democracy begins in conversation." In a way, Etzioni explained what Dewey could have meant by that statement. I thought, too, of a conversation I once had with a woman who is a member of parliament in a developing African nation. She told me that introducing a Western democratic model to her country has been hailed as offering women more participation: a few women, like herself, now hold official positions in her country's governing body for the first time, in contrast to the complete exclusion of women from tribal decision-making bodies.

But look again, she cautioned—look beneath the surface—and it turns out that women had significant influence in the tribal system, and have virtually none in the modernized "democracy." In the tribal system (and here is where Etzioni's analysis is particularly insightful), decisions were not made on the spot. Although no women were allowed to take part in the official public gatherings at which decisions were made, issues were never voted on at the same meeting at which they were raised. Instead, when a new issue was raised, the men went away without making a decision. For a period of weeks, they would discuss the matter with their families and acquaintances. And they listened in particular to the respected women who weighed in with their perspective. When the men gathered later to vote, they took into account the views of these women.

Now consider the parliamentary system that was recently introduced: Issues are raised and immediately voted on. Although there are women in the voting body, they are so few that their votes do not influence the results. And to the extent that members do discuss issues, they do so among themselves, at bars that they repair to at the end of a day's business. But the women members cannot join them at these bars, both because it would be unseemly for a woman to frequent a bar, and because the women have to return home in the evening to their

husbands and children. In short, what seems like an advance in democracy actually undermined it—and Etzioni’s insight captures a bit of why that is.

Another issue Etzioni discusses in *The New Golden Rule* is the role played by the media in encouraging polarization and confrontation (a role I discuss in *The Argument Culture* as well). Here, too, he looks below the surface to show that steps taken to improve the situation do not always have that effect. For example,

“Fact checks,” which the media instituted more widely after the 1988 election, are of some merit, but they may have also caused considerable harm; the media now tends to find some minor inaccuracies in the statements of all candidates and thus fosters cynicism among the electorate.

In other words, although it is clearly helpful for the press to use its investigative abilities to examine the accuracy of campaign statements and ads, there is unforeseen fallout. The cumulative effect of exposing “minor inaccuracies” in every candidate’s statements contributes to what is probably the most dangerous result of the argument culture: a pervasive cynicism among members of society, so that they lose faith in and connection to the public institutions on which their lives depend. This loss of faith and connection is directed at not only politicians, but also the law and, ironically, the press itself—a contemporary example of shooting the messenger.

Though I have mentioned only these two examples, they show the power of Etzioni’s observations. He gives me hope that we may yet escape with our skins from the crossfire generated by the argument culture.

When Theory Meets Practice: Communitarian Ethics and the Family

Don Browning

By profession, Amitai Etzioni is a sociologist. He is also a practical thinker and public philosopher willing to take concrete positions that spark dialogue. Because his thinking generally addresses particular issues in specific historical contexts, it is easy to miss the complexity—the thickness—of the underlying moral and political philosophy. In this essay, I want to illustrate how this is true with regard to his thinking about the family.

Communitarianism can have a variety of meanings. To some people it can mean rule by the majority. For those such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, Alastair MacIntyre, and the Roman Catholic Church, it means a presumed priority of the power and truth of a classic tradition and the communities that carry it. For others, such as Jürgen Habermas, it might mean rule by distortion-free community consensus. Etzioni's moral and political philosophy respects and to a degree absorbs all of those meanings of communitarianism, but organizes them into a larger model.

This broader philosophy influences both Etzioni's analysis of the situation of families today and his normative understanding of good families. It is easy to become preoccupied with details of his diagnosis of families—his concern about the divorce rate, the rise of single-parent families and out-of-wedlock births, and the declining amount of time parents spend with their children. Depending on one's personal values, one can become hostile or enthusiastic about his high valuation of the two-parent family, the need for fathers in the lives of children, and the importance of a strong cultural appreciation for parents, children, and marriage. But it is best not to rush too quickly

into the details of these positions. I recommend instead pausing to examine the general philosophical stance undergirding his various specific judgments.

A Deontological Sociologist?

The mantra of Etzioni's communitarian movement is this: both rights and responsibilities are basic moral values and should be balanced with one another. This is true for all times and all places. Some societies, such as Iran or mainland China, may swing too far in the direction of responsibilities, order, and control; others may move too far in the direction of rights and freedoms, as is the case with the United States today. When they become extreme in one direction societies have a moral obligation, in spite of their traditions and rationalizations, to move in the other direction. This theory has implications for families as well; the extreme cultural emphasis in the United States on individual rights, freedom, and self-fulfillment has contributed to family disruption. A cultural shift back toward marital and parental responsibility is now a moral necessity.

But how does Etzioni ultimately ground the theory that all humans universally have both rights and responsibilities and that all societies *should* balance these two moral values? Answering this question will throw light on how he grounds his appreciation for intact egalitarian families. And this discussion will also open the way to offering minor suggestions for how Etzioni can strengthen his family theory.

Two texts give us special insights into the philosophical grounds for the theory of rights and responsibilities: *The Moral Dimension: Toward a New Economics* and *The New Golden Rule: Community and Morality in a Democratic Society*. In these texts one gains a clear insight into a crucial aspect of Etzioni's moral and political philosophy—his *deontological* perspective. Deontologists assert that moral ideas and actions have certain intrinsic qualities that can be recognized as ethical in-and-of-themselves, and not because they are means to nonmoral goals—goals such as an increase in the instrumentally achieved satisfactions of life. In contrast, a *teleological* grounding to ethics holds that moral ideas and behaviors are justified if they increase, for self or community, the amount of nonmoral goods—goods such as pleasure,

food, housing, clean air, beauty, etc. Although they differed in major ways, the great teleologists of Western philosophy have been Aristotle, Aquinas, the utilitarians Bentham and Mill, and the American pragmatists James and Dewey.

Most of the social sciences are broadly *functional* in their explanatory logics: psychological, social, and economic structures meet human needs and are thus functional or purposeful—which means they are teleological. Etzioni as a sociologist often refers to himself as a “neofunctionalist.” But what does that mean? It means that he has incorporated a deontological element into his otherwise functionalist sociological system. Valid moral ideas do not have functionalist origins, he claims, but they may have certain functionalist consequences in the societies in which they work.

The significance of this move can best be seen in *The Moral Dimension's* critique of the neoclassical school of economics. Neoclassical economics is mainly associated with the University of Chicago and the names of Milton Friedman, Gary Becker, and legal theorist Judge Richard Posner. This school holds that economic behavior is motivated by rational calculation designed to maximize the satisfaction of a relatively small number of hard-wired human desires. Some members of this school have extended the theory beyond the realm of economic behavior and given accounts of human behavior in education, law, and even the family. This perspective has claimed attention throughout academia because of its relatively powerful abilities to predict human behavior.

Etzioni is functionalist enough not to reject outright the neoclassical perspective. Instead, he attempts to absorb it into a more encompassing “bi-utility” theory of moral motivation. He develops a theory of multiple selves; we have at least two selves, one coming from our basic drive to satisfy our individual desires, and another more distinctively moral self that regulates these needs in light of moral concerns. Etzioni argues that this second self—this moral self grounded deontologically by insights into the intrinsic dignity of other selves—is a more or less constant presence in human life. For the most part, it constrains and guides the rational satisfaction-seeking self that neoclassical economics supposes is the only true self that exists. Yes, human beings compete to satisfy their needs, but generally within the

context of moral assumptions about the worth and dignity of others. This is how we recognize that someone in the competition has broken the rules.

This subordination of functionalism to deontology is developed and nuanced in *The New Golden Rule*. Etzioni's reformulation of the ancient and nearly universal Golden Rule goes like this: "Respect and uphold society's moral order as you would have society respect and uphold your autonomy." This is clearly not only a variation on the Golden Rule and the Christian concept of neighborly love, but also a twist on Kant's categorical imperative. But Etzioni's contextualization of these deontological principles may be as novel as his reformulation of them. It reveals the distinctively sociological and communitarian framework of his deontology.

To understand this contextualization, we should begin with Etzioni's assertion that a "good society requires sharing core values." These core values are certainly more important in the long run than a powerful economy and efficient technology. And such core values are crucial for determining what we mean by family and the content of our family ideals. But how do we arrive at our core values? First, the will of the majority in democratic rule certainly counts for determining shared values, especially if it is achieved through broad and deep dialogue at several levels in the society. But more is needed. If democratic rule is to avoid injustice to minorities, it must be consistent with a society's moral "frames" or ideals, whether they are encoded in a constitution or diffusely embedded in the culture.

But these steps are still not enough. At a third level, Etzioni advocates "cross-societal dialogue"; the core values that emerge from critical dialogue between societies may have a deeper validity than those of individual societies, especially if the dialoguing partners bring their deepest convictions into the conversation. But finally, such cross-cultural dialogue works, for Etzioni, because all people have some access to the universal, self-evident, deontological core values of the new Golden Rule—respect for both autonomy and order. Dialogue does not create these core values; it uncovers, awakens, and enhances a culture's awareness of them. Etzioni writes that the compelling nature of the basic communitarian values "can be hidden under the influence of historical and cultural factors and economic duress.

Often, only after people are exposed to these virtues through continued dialogue do they realize their compelling nature.”

In optimal situations, the values of autonomy and social order can be learned from our communities through a process of internalization; in turn, however, our deeper deontological moral intuitions—once we become conscious of them—can lead us to affirm that which we may have first internalized from our communities of socialization. When this happens we say, “Yes, what I learned from my family or community is indeed true.” The unjust, the immature, the fanatic, the careless, and the culturally one-sided are “people who have not yet been properly engaged in communitarian dialogues—dialogues that will help them listen to their muffled inner voices, which speak for a society in which both moral order and autonomy are well nourished and balanced.” Such communitarian dialogues help people discover and express their inner moral voices.

The Communitarian Family: The Fuller Picture

Etzioni’s neofunctionalism, with its deontological element, is still interested in consequences and the realization in human affairs of relative goods, some of which are patently instrumental. But this is a secondary interest. We should first respect individuals and the social order and then, within these moral constraints, try to maximize wealth, health, and various other indices of well-being.

From the perspective of this moral framework, we should not be surprised to discover that “peer marriage,” or what I call the equal-regard family, is his ideal conjugal arrangement. Peer marriage is based upon the mutual respect for the dignity and worth of both husband and wife and their equal rights to the privileges and responsibilities of both the public and domestic worlds. This means, in principle, equal access for both wife and husband to the wage market, the responsibilities of citizenship, and the demands and joys of parenthood. In light of the time and energy it takes to raise children, society should support peer marriage with a variety of special provisions—shorter work weeks, flex time, tax credits and exemptions, and much longer job leaves so that either fathers or mothers can care for their newborn infants. On this last point Etzioni advances very robust proposals: he advocates six months of paid leave and up to one-and-

one-half years of unpaid leave. Note that most of these measures listed here are instrumental goods—more money, more time, better health. All of them, however, are guided by the deontological values of equal respect between husband and wife and their equal responsibilities for the care of their children—who themselves should be treated in a deontological fashion, as ends and never as solely means.

Within the moral framework of peer marriage, Etzioni expresses support for the intact family defined as two parents biologically related to their children. He is fully aware that many single parents do quite well with their children. But anthropological evidence from around the world, plus recent social science research, demonstrates that *on average* two-parent families are better for children. Child rearing is a labor-intensive activity requiring at least two sets of hands that are highly invested in the caring task.

However, peer marriage and the responsibilities of child care are not easily reconciled when both parents are in the wage economy. Thus we currently have what Etzioni calls a “parental deficit,” which is seen in the decline in the numbers he cites for the time parents spend with their children: from 30 hours a week in 1965 to 17 hours in 1985. This is mainly a cultural problem—a devaluation of children and parenting in our society. According to Etzioni, therefore, the cure must entail a cultural revolution, one that gives rise to a new appreciation of children, a higher valuation of parenting, and a renunciation of consumerism and careerism. This cultural revolution should be brought about through dialogue and persuasion that awakens and gives expression to the moral voice of the community. Social systemic rearrangements, such as better relations between paid employment and home, are important but secondary to the need to reconfigure our cultural sensibilities.

It is important to point out that Etzioni sees many social system proposals as imperfect solutions. For instance, a huge expansion of the child care industry is no simple solution for the parental deficit. In addition to the difficulties of assuring quality care, the moral formation of children—which he associates with the development of self-control and empathy—requires deep attachments during the first two years of life. Parental leaves that make it possible for at least one parent to be home with children for significant amounts of time is thus the better option.

Nor is the social-system solution of returning to “fault divorce” a good answer to family disruption stemming from the high divorce rate. There is plenty of new social science research that demonstrates that on the whole children suffer from divorce. But returning to a fault divorce system, at this stage in history, is probably too coercive. In general, Etzioni turns to the law to shape social behaviors only after extensive dialogue has failed to create a new moral consensus that remedies the problem at hand. In addition, it often takes vigorous dialogue to create a climate for good laws. In the spirit of this reluctance to turn too quickly to legal remedies, one can understand his attraction to the state of Louisiana’s recent Covenant Marriage Law. Since this law makes it optional for couples to choose between the old no-fault marriage and a more demanding covenant marriage, Etzioni sees the Louisiana experiment as a noncoercive way for law to upgrade civil morality. He calls it “opportuning virtue”—the law offers a more ideal vision of marriage, encourages it, but does not coerce people to choose it. And it may not take a general law as such to opportune virtue. Etzioni is also a supporter of Elizabeth Scott’s idea that couples should be encouraged to write prenuptial agreements that will increase the expectations placed on their marriages—agreements that, once signed, would have the force of law. He refers to such agreements as “supervows.”

If, finally, couples *are* driven to consider divorce, Etzioni joins William Galston and others in emphasizing counseling, education in parent responsibilities to children after divorce, and the filing of long-term financial plans covering the needs of children until they are grown. This should be done before the legal division of property between the divorcing parents.

But even more important than covenant marriage or supervows is Etzioni’s appreciation for marriage education. This interest goes in two directions. First, he advocates a more widespread use—by schools, churches, and the state—of the new methods in premarital preparation, couples communication, and conflict resolution. Etzioni is aware of recent research by John Gottman and others showing that married couples who stay together have as much conflict as those who separate and divorce. The difference between the two groups is that the couples who remain married have better communication and conflict resolution skills. These skills can be taught. Etzioni’s promotion of marriage

education is in line with his general concern to renew culture and the institutions supporting social and cultural virtues, rather than resort to law or other forms of coercion.

His second direction is toward a recontextualization of sex education in public schools. He argues that there is a place for such education, but only within a context that also prepares students for marriage, parenthood, and that equips them with skills in interpersonal communication. Etzioni is critical of those forms of sex education that aspire to be value free and only provide students with technical knowledge about contraception, venereal disease, and pregnancy. He believes that through dialogue among schools, parents, and the wider community, a more encompassing moral framework for sex education can be devised that re-emphasizes marriage and conveys skills in communication for intimacy. Within this context he advocates what some call “abstinence plus.” This is an approach that first emphasizes sexual abstinence for teenagers but also educates in “safe sex” for those who are determined to be sexually active.

An Implicit Theory of Subsidiarity

Etzioni’s strong emphasis on peer marriage and the importance of the two-parent marriage for children should not obscure his equally vigorous promotion of supports from the extended family and wider community. As he writes in *The Spirit of Community*, communities have a moral responsibility to “enable parents to...dedicate themselves” to their children.

Communities are best viewed as if they were Chinese nesting boxes, in which less encompassing communities (families, neighborhoods) are nestled within more encompassing ones (local villages and towns), which in turn are situated within still more encompassing communities, the national and cross-national ones (such as the budding European Community). Moreover, there is room for nongeographic communities that criss-cross the others, such as professional or work-based communities. When they are intact, they are all relevant, and all lay moral claims on us by appealing to and reinforcing our values.

In the ideal world, peer marriages and the communitarian family would be influenced and supported by all of these surrounding forms of community.

In taking such a stand, Etzioni's social philosophy of families becomes similar to Roman Catholic teachings on "subsidiarity." But there is a slight difference between the two perspectives, and it is this difference that points to a way to strengthen Etzioni's theory. The concept of subsidiarity has roots in Aristotelian philosophy and the social teachings of Thomas Aquinas, and was intentionally introduced at the level of papal teachings by Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XI. It teaches that both families and grass-roots communities should be permitted to take responsibility for areas of life that they have superior capacities to address. In the case of families, parents should have primary rights and responsibilities for their children. Etzioni would agree; parenthood entails responsibilities and, along with these, certain rights.

Subsidiarity also holds that more encompassing communities should be prepared to give *subsidium* (supports) of the kind that help families and smaller communities fulfill their primary tasks. If needed, larger communities should give additional assistance to smaller ones when difficulties emerge that undercut their normal capacities to discharge what they generally do best. It is in light of this teaching that the Roman Catholic Church became an early advocate of government supports for a just family income, reasonable working hours, and certain kinds of family welfare. All of this is in the spirit of communitarianism as well.

But there is a slight difference between the idea of subsidiarity and Etzioni's position. All the way from Aquinas to Leo XIII, the Catholic position believes that natural parents are inclined, by virtue of their biological ties, to care for their children more intensely than others. In fact, there was in the concept of subsidiarity something like an early theory of what contemporary evolutionary psychologists call "kin altruism." Modern kin altruism theory teaches that we are inclined to give preferential treatment to our blood relatives and care for our own children because they are literally (i.e., genetically) a part of ourselves. From Aristotle to Aquinas to modern evolutionary psychology, various models of kin altruism have been invoked to explain why, on average, natural parents are more invested in their children than other people. The idea of subsidiarity respects the initiatives of families partially because it acknowledges this ancient insight into our natural inclinations to care for our own.

Etzioni has been reluctant to shore up his own advocacy of the two-parent family with appeals to evolutionary psychology's theory of kin altruism. I once heard him say, "Genes do not teach morality." Of course, he is right. The psychological internalization of community values, persuasion, dialogue, and our deontological intuitions—these are the main sources of morality in the fuller sense. But the biological identification that occurs between parents and their children, accounted for in part by the theory of kin altruism, does contribute to our knowledge of the *moral psychology* of parenthood, if not the full moral understanding of it. It helps us understand why natural parents have strong inclinations toward caring for their children—inclinations that can be built on and stabilized into more enduring parental commitments. Etzioni's own advocacy of the two-parent family could be strengthened and clarified by more use of the theory of kin altruism. Furthermore, the Catholic Church's use of kin altruism in its theory of parental motivations is a good example of how this naturalistic insight can be elaborated and enriched by additional moral and religious ideas, as is the case in the church's full theology of marriage. We need not contend that only natural parents can raise children in order to proffer the more balanced idea that if our cultural institutions can both celebrate and undergird such families, our society will be much the better for it.

Etzioni's thinking on the family is much more than a series of interesting cultural and political proposals. When seen within the wider context of his moral philosophy and social theory, his proposals constitute a total perspective on the family that deserves both high respect and widespread discussion.

Communitarian Families: A New Center, Not a Compromise

David M. Anderson

In *The Spirit of Community*, the book that first articulated the moral vision of the communitarian movement, Amitai Etzioni explains how strengthening the moral fabric of the family system is central to the overarching aim of strengthening the moral fabric of American society. While a weakened family system is not the only cause of moral decay, Etzioni argues that it is certainly a major cause. As the Responsive Communitarian Platform states, “The best place to start is where each new generation acquires its moral anchoring: at home, in the family.”

In addressing the family, though, Etzioni finds much lacking in current debates and takes aim at targets on both the left and right. He seeks to take back “family values” from religious conservatives and aims to challenge the self-interested motivational assumptions of the conservative Chicago School of neoclassical economics. On the left, he challenges those who reduce almost all problems in the family—ranging from divorce to out-of-wedlock births—to economic injustice. And he challenges political philosophers such as John Rawls who support a conception of liberal neutrality that is inimical to supporting core values in our civil society.

Criticisms such as these are not in and of themselves exceptional. What makes Etzioni’s approach distinctive is the same general feature that makes his approach to other aspects of American society distinctive. An effort is made to transcend the polarized debate between liberals and conservatives in order to articulate a vision that incorporates and synthesizes key insights from each. Etzioni’s vision of the family represents not merely a middle position, as some critics assert,

but a synthesis of opposing views—a “third way” philosophy. (Others, including William Galston, E.J. Dionne Jr., and Henry Tam, have also sought to develop “third way” approaches.)

To give but one example of a third way approach: Etzioni rejects the polarizing language of “more” or “less” government intervention in the private sphere because it obscures the fact that American society, like most Western societies, presents the complex challenge of orchestrating a relationship between not two but three spheres: government, the market, and civil society (families, schools, associations, etc.). Communitarian solutions typically involve a coordinated response from these three sectors in which everyone is called on to demonstrate more responsibility. With analysis such as this, Etzioni strives to be a transformational theorist, changing the terms of the debate and presenting new alternatives.

Defining the New Center

At a Senate hearing Etzioni testified, only partly in jest, that “it would be preferable to have three parents per child.” It is thus not surprising that, in the effort to establish a “new center” for the American family, Etzioni focuses on supporting parents in their efforts to meet their responsibilities to their children. In *The Spirit of Community*, Etzioni proclaims: “...parents have a moral responsibility to their community to invest themselves in the proper upbringing of their children, and communities—to enable parents to so dedicate themselves.” Many of the specific means of achieving such goals—family leave, flexible work hours, premarital counseling, discouraging divorce—are covered by Don Browning in his essay [see p.52]. I will focus here on placing these policies within a specific theoretical framework.

Etzioni expresses support for the dominant form of marriage and family—the dual-income heterosexual marriage (preferably a “peer” marriage) with children. Nonetheless, he readily acknowledges that some single-parent families are better parented than some two-parent families, and recognizes that some single parents are fortunate to have escaped spouses who harmed them. Thus his support for the dominant form of family might best be understood not as a criticism of other forms, but as a desire to ensure that those who are considering marriage, and those who are already married, are better equipped to have good marriages and stable families.

Given this seeming “advocate one position but don’t reject the others” stance, there is admittedly a strong temptation to say that Etzioni simply takes a middle position on the family. But it is instructive to note that Etzioni constructs his position by drawing on not only the mainstream elements of opposing sides, but frequently on the fairly extreme elements. From the liberal, even ultra-liberal, side, he supports a *paid* parental leave policy, one that would require that the government and corporations provide parents of newborns with one year of paid parental leave. From the conservative, even ultra-conservative, side, he supports revisions in state divorce laws, challenging that which liberals fought for over a period of years (but which feminists after a while themselves challenged because women usually suffer economically after a divorce). Rather than expressing a moderate view, Etzioni’s approach expresses an ambitious new synthesis.

What brings the ideas together into a unified package is a consistent emphasis on the concepts of moral character, virtue, and community. A typical progressive policy such as paid parental leave thus becomes a policy that would place parents in a position to instill the requisite virtues into their children. A typical conservative policy such as divorce law reform becomes a policy that would place parents in a position to show responsibility toward their children and to develop the requisite virtues that parents, as well as children, need to be morally responsible family members and citizens. In both cases virtues such as diligence, temperance, fairness, and empathy are the ends that are sought, with legal reforms being the means.

It is striking that Etzioni’s approach to family values does not take sides in many of the battles between liberals and conservatives. While liberals prize redistributive measures and conservatives prize social regulations, communitarians can prize both. Etzioni can support a new economic entitlement program (paid leave) at the same time that he supports a new social regulation (divorce reform) because he does not reduce problems in the American family to solely economic injustice or to solely a failure in personal responsibility.

The structure of a new center can also be illustrated by looking at the issue of liberty. While Etzioni supports most laws that protect individual autonomy, he also supports those laws that limit liberty when the moral order of society is at risk. Such laws rely on one of two

justifications: liberty may be limited in order to promote equality, or liberty may be limited in order to promote values like stability and safety. The first approach is associated with modern liberalism because the liberty being limited is economic (e.g., property rights) and the equality being promoted is economic (e.g., income levels). The second approach is associated with conservatism because the liberty being limited is social (e.g., ability to drive late at night without fear of a random drug or alcohol test) and the value being promoted is social (e.g., safety).

Note that in the first instance the autonomy of the well-off is indeed restricted (due to higher taxes), but the justification for the restriction is based on expanding the autonomy of those less well-off. In the second instance the liberty and autonomy of everyone is restricted in order to promote moral order, in this case the social value of safety. Because he supports a vision of a good society in which the master values of autonomy and moral order are held in balance, Etzioni, unlike liberals and conservatives, is able to support laws that limit liberty in both ways without contradicting himself. And because he regards these master values as inherently in tension rather than as smoothly functioning (as in Parsonian social theory), he can explain any apparent contradiction between the two sets of laws as an inevitable consequence of an effort to build a good society. Thus Etzioni is willing to advocate policies whether the conditions the policies address are economic or social, legal or nonlegal. Here again we see Etzioni carving out a new center rather than adopting a bland middle position.

Considering the Family in Context

While Etzioni gives significant attention to strengthening the family system, he is at pains to show how new relationships must be established between the institution of the family and other institutions, ranging from the schools to the workplace. It is important to distinguish two points in this regard. First, Etzioni clearly thinks that problems of family instability, juvenile delinquency, crime, political corruption, school performance, and workplace inequities are not simply reducible to problems in the family. Second, Etzioni thinks that solutions to problems within social institutions—like the family—will only be solved when different social institutions work together.

Thus we find that it is necessary for employers to adopt family-friendly and community-friendly policies in order for families and communities to flourish, especially during a time of increasing competition from world markets. These policies range from paid parental leave and flex-time to policies that soften the effects of downsizing on whole communities. In turn, individuals and families have their own responsibilities. Community justice requires that families participate in activities such as crime watches. And family members must volunteer their time and effort to solve community problems that cannot be solved by just government programs or calls for personal responsibility: women who have been beaten, citizens who become homeless, and others in need of compassion must rely in part on the moral efforts of those who act separately from the government.

There are a number of ways that Etzioni's approach to strengthening American families could itself be strengthened. For one, the call for paid parental leave addresses only part of the problem. Even heroic efforts on the part of parents will not eliminate the typical two-paycheck family's need for quality day care. Subsidized day care across socioeconomic classes would seem warranted. Second, the general call for moral responsibility among citizens needs to give more emphasis to the responsibilities of men and of corporations. It must also be acknowledged that there are times when Etzioni slips into the language of political compromise rather than political synthesis. Nonetheless, he provides the main outlines for a new center for the American family. If we can integrate the language of balancing order and autonomy and the language of virtue into our tired political debates, we can raise the discourse to a new level. This is true not only with the family, but with social issues across the board.

Genetic Fix at Twenty-Five

Thomas Magnell

Genetic Fix, which first appeared in 1973, is Amitai Etzioni's most extended foray into public health policy. Written for a general audience, the book is a series of reflections on a 1972 conference held by the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences. The focus, as might be expected, is on the social and ethical concerns for medicine spawned by issues in genetics.

It is salutary to note that more time has intervened since the publication of *Genetic Fix* than had, at that time, passed since the discovery of DNA. Measured by progress, the last 25 years have been so great that the subtitle Etzioni hazarded, *The Next Technological Revolution*, now seems unremarkable, with the digital revolution being the only other contender. But Etzioni was bold enough to argue that even in 1973 we needed to start to initiate serious public discussions to meet the developing brave new world. With the Human Genome Project now well underway, which will provide something of a complete map of human genetic information, genetic research continues to accelerate. That is sure to make the moral issues ever more poignant.

Of the many issues that surround scientific advances in genetics, the possibility of genetic selection for children may raise the most troubling questions for many people, since it gives rise to considerations of eugenics. Direct manipulation of the germ cells through genetic engineering can bring about changes greater than the most intensive breeding plans could, and more quickly too. Cloning, which Etzioni mentions in passing, needing only somatic cells, could magnify the pervasiveness of significant changes. Dramatic alterations of the species thus become possible. In contrast, straightforward gene therapy on somatic cells, as in the rectification of adenosine deaminase

deficiency, is not particularly problematic. At any rate, it is not particularly more problematic than any other form of therapy.

Eugenics has negative undertones for most Americans largely for its association with justifications given for racist immigration policies and compulsory sterilization programs in the United States earlier in the century, as well as racist and genocidal policies given full force by the Nazis. The associations are unfortunate inasmuch as they tend to cut off reasoned reflection, suffocating intelligent discussion from the outset—an all too common way to give free reign to prejudice, dogmatism, and flabby thought. It is hard to find moral grounds to object to a desire to get rid of dysgenic characteristics such as cystic fibrosis. With genetic engineering, it may become easier to eliminate certain chromosomal aberrations than it is to eliminate some viruses.

But this minimal, negative form of eugenics might eventually transform into a more ambitious, positive form that would select for current ideas of desired characteristics such as intelligence or looks, or even attempt the remaking of the human genome. That is much more morally problematic, enough so that worries of a slippery slope appear justified. The fear is that we might eliminate the negative and go on to accentuate the positive as all the while we mess with Mr. In-between.

Etzioni does express some anxiety over slippery-slope considerations. He exhibits a Kantian presentiment in voicing concern that with genetic engineering, “there would be a further weakening of the moral veneer which keeps people civilized and keeps them from viewing their spouse, fellow citizens, all persons, as ends rather than means.” Nevertheless, he is inclined to maintain that worries over eugenics are overdone. Dire consequences that make for good press are, in his view, scenarios for a distant future. It may be that some genetic alterations made today would redound for the worse 20 generations ahead, if left uncorrected. But the answer to that is to correct the problems as they develop in the interim. We need to think ahead; that is one of Etzioni’s central injunctions. At the same time, it would be foolhardy to sacrifice present benefits for remote possibilities when those possibilities can be reviewed and kept at bay by individuals in generations closer to them.

Personal and Social Levels

The moral overview that Etzioni takes of the issues raised by the genetic manipulation of germ cells is reflected in his analysis. He approaches the issues on both a personal and a societal level. In addition, on each level he recognizes two different possible uses of new genetic powers: therapeutic, as in eliminating Down's Syndrome, and breeding, as in selecting characteristics to promote intelligence.

Etzioni finds no compelling reason to stop individuals from using new genetic tools for therapeutic purposes. He is emphatic on the need for genetic counseling across the board, from heterozygous carriers of Tay-Sachs considering whether or not to conceive, to prospective parents with indications of Down's syndrome from amniocentesis considering whether or not to abort. In every case, though, he ultimately argues for autonomy for the individuals considering whether or not to have the child. "No church or government," he writes, "should force parents to give birth to severely deformed children." But his opposition to coercing individuals is accompanied by a caveat regarding social responsibility. He holds that after severely deformed children are born, "society does not have to, under all economic conditions, pick up the tab for the upbringing of children."

Societies as a whole may also seek to use genetic tools for therapeutic purposes. In Etzioni's view, this is not particularly problematic. Encouraging individuals to fight genetic illnesses may well be advisable, he holds, as long as the efforts are not coercive but rely solely on persuasion. He would not, for example, object to a campaign to stamp out genes that carry colon cancer, which he compares to a public health campaign to fight tooth decay.

As for genetic manipulation for breeding purposes, Etzioni again takes the position that restrictions on individuals would be wrong. In contrast with thinkers who fear that people will become obsessed with a single genetic ideal, he maintains that not all people would choose the same traits. He also argues that if women are legally allowed to have abortions for any reason at all, there can be no legal objection against a woman wanting a child taller than the one she currently carries. In addition, while acknowledging that the prospect of sex selection by abortion might well result in an imbalance of males to females, he discounts predictions that the imbalance would have

terribly adverse social consequences. Of course, all this leaves to one side the moral questions presented by abortion on demand.

Etzioni does draw a line when it comes to societal breeding. But even here he does not share widespread concerns about eugenics. He argues that if a society urges but does not force people to use genetic manipulation to create children with a certain kind of genetic profile, then we ought not to object as a matter of social policy. This is certainly questionable. Just one of many serious concerns is that such a policy could easily devolve into governmentally sanctioned eugenics.

Problems of Knowledge and Genetic Diversity

Since 1973, as genetic research has expanded the scope of our knowledge about ourselves, we have been forced to consider questions about such personal knowledge and its applications. The more we know, the more we must seriously ask when, how, to what extent, and to whom is it right to reveal genetic information. It has become plain that genetic information can be sensitive and needs to be located in recognized spheres of privacy. Employers, insurance companies, even credit agencies have self-interested reasons to gain as much of our genetic information as possible. We, in turn, have self-interested reasons for not having our genetic information disclosed. The boundary that promotes a harmony of interests has yet to be determined.

Whatever the limits to what others should be legitimately allowed to know of us may be, we must also face up to the personal question about just what we should really know about ourselves. At first blush, the possibility of gaining greater genetic information about our own heritable characteristics would seem a good thing. Certainly it gives added sense to the Socratic injunction "Know thyself." But the knowledge to be gained from genetic testing differs considerably depending on whether the testing is for single-gene defects involving just one gene, or polygenic defects involving multiple genes. In the case of a single-gene defect, as in the chromosomal aberration that is expressed in Huntington's Chorea, the genetic test can be clearly inculpatory or exculpatory. Where treatment is lacking, it is far from obvious that testing is wise, unless the individual to be tested is considering having a child. Even so, it is easy to see how some people might want to resolve the uncertainty about their genetic condition, even at the risk of terribly disappointing news.

But the situation is more complicated in the case of polygenic defects where, given our current genetic understanding, varying degrees of penetration result in mere dispositions, as seems evident for heart disease and some cancers. Testing then may only offer indications of slightly or somewhat heightened risks beyond a norm. But such information can be far more disturbing than warranted, even for individuals who understand probabilities well enough to stay away from Powerball. What is clear is that serious genetic counseling needs to accompany genetic testing.

In a larger way, genetic research raises an issue for posterity and the far-flung future. It concerns our genetic diversity as a species and a potential dissonance of interests of people taken as a group and people taken as individuals. The more genetic manipulation has become possible, the more geneticists have become concerned about maintaining genetic diversity. Broad diversity in the gene pool has evolutionary and survival value. Genetic engineering of germ cells creates the prospect of narrowing the gene pool more completely and more quickly than strict breeding policies could ever have done. Much as broad-based prescription of antibiotics may be detrimental to the well-being of all of us, even as it seems beneficial for each of us taken one at a time, so too may genetic manipulation weaken the species, even as it confers benefits on particular individuals. Our ability to tamper with the gene pool may well outrun our wisdom, such as it really is or as we think it is.

Conclusion: Public Policy and Values

Almost all of Amitai Etzioni's works are large-scale discussions of matters of public policy, and *Genetic Fix* is not an exception. While I have framed the issues discussed in it as moral issues, as indeed they are, it would be unwise to think that the two types of discussions are wholly distinct. All too often questions of values and questions of public policy are separated into different realms of inquiry, each populated by intellectually xenophobic inquirers afraid of venturing outside self-assigned realms. Part of the value of Etzioni's work as a public intellectual lies in the recognition that we need to do more to bring together matters of public policy with reasoned understandings of values. With words that 25 years later we may hope will begin to resonate with us, he goes so far as to say: "The primary mission for the next era is the restoration of the priority of human values."

THE WORLD

Toward an International Human Rights (and Responsibilities) Regime: Some Obstacles

Daniel A. Bell

In chapter eight of *The New Golden Rule*, Amitai Etzioni argues for the need to “find a set of worldwide moral foundations that could undergird judgments of the values of various particular societies.” He notes that the aspiration to affirm a set of global values also informs the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and similar documents, but argues that “the trouble with this approach is that the United Nations Charter, international law, and various declarations—in which the globalists find the values they seek to build on—are not widely affirmed.” In response, Etzioni suggests several original ideas for improving the international rights regime so that it would reflect more meaningful agreement on global values. The problem, however, is that the attempt to implement some of these ideas may prove to be ineffective if not counterproductive. In this essay, I discuss (briefly) three issues that need to be resolved before we can feel confident about the prospects of achieving a truly universal human rights regime.

The Perils of Inclusive Dialogues

Etzioni notes that international documents such as the UDHR are not widely affirmed primarily “because of the ways these documents have been formulated. Typically, they are neither the reflection of a

truly democratic process in the international bodies or in the countries represented in them, nor do they reflect the result of a worldwide moral dialogue.” Etzioni argues that “such resolutions would command more respect if they reflected the work of a properly representative world parliament or a global tribunal.” Even that, however, would not be sufficient: “Before we can expect to see global mores that have the compelling power of those of various societies, the citizens of the world will have to engage in worldwide moral dialogues.” In other words, only the inclusion of diverse participants from a wide range of Western and non-Western societies can ensure that the agreed upon global norms reflect truly universal aspirations. Anything less, by implication, translates into an attempt by a minority of voices to promote their particular values under the spurious banner of universalism.

While I agree with this diagnosis of the problem, Etzioni’s suggestion for “global megalogues” would likely be difficult to implement. It may well be true that “technological developments have made such global megalogues possible.” But the main obstacle such megalogues face is getting participants to agree upon anything more than vague aspirations and empty platitudes. Put simply: the more inclusive the deliberations, the more difficult it will be to arrive at any politically meaningful resolutions.

Addressing this problem by limiting participation, however, would raise its own set of problems. One might reasonably argue that a representative sample of leaders and citizens from around the world, if the sample were kept small enough, would be able to reach agreement on the global values that are supposed to guide and constrain policymakers. But this leads to a number of questions: Should the dialogue involve political leaders, diplomats, international lawyers, leaders of religious traditions, academics, representatives of nongovernmental organizations, ordinary citizens, or a combination of these? How many from each group? How many from each country? If the outcomes of these deliberations are meant to command international legitimacy—i.e., to trump the decisions of national political leaders—there will be endless disputes over the right way to select “representative” participants.

Appealing to Foundational Values

A small set of crucial rights are valued, at least in theory, by all governments in the contemporary world. The most obvious are the prohibitions against slavery, genocide, murder, torture, prolonged arbitrary detention, and systematic racial discrimination. These rights have become part of international customary law, and they are not contested in the public rhetoric of the international arena. Of course, many gross human rights violations occur “off the record,” and human rights groups such as Amnesty International have the task of exposing the gap between public allegiance to rights and the sad reality of ongoing abuse. This is largely practical work, however. Theoreticians can contribute with suggestions for expanding, and rendering more meaningful, this rather thin list of rights.

Etzioni contributes to the debate in the following way. He notes that this thin list of human rights represents nothing more than an empirical consensus between different parties. As a result, “it embraces only a few values, such as condemning murder, theft, and rape. And even here we are on unsure grounds.” Thus he suggests that we engage in the above described global moral dialogues, which would “advance the articulation of a core—rather than a thin list—of globally shared values.” Such dialogue would not simply consist of a search for *de facto* common ground that avoids condemning other societies on the basis of one’s own moral values. Instead, Etzioni says that he “deliberately refer[s] to laying moral claims.” Participants in the global dialogue should not be afraid to raise their cross-cultural moral voices and to lay moral claims on other societies by appealing to their own controversial moral beliefs. Quite the opposite: they are actively encouraged to do so. If people bring “strong substantive values to the nascent worldwide dialogue,” Etzioni argues, a “much stronger global core of shared values” is likely to evolve.

Is this kind of dialogue likely to yield constructive results? Etzioni imagines a dialogue where the West “criticizes China for its violation of human rights. And China should be viewed as equally legitimate when it criticizes American society for its neglect of filial duties.” One can imagine other possibilities. A committed Muslim condemns the “loose” sexual morality in Western societies, arguing for the worldwide criminalization of homosexuality. A farmer in India condemns

the decadent use of resources in Western countries and argues for a radical redistribution of global wealth. A Thai Buddhist committed to the doctrine of nonviolence condemns the use of the death penalty in the United States. A devout Catholic condemns the widespread practice of abortion in China. What is the likely outcome of such a “dialogue,” where people draw on deeply felt moral matters to condemn the values they do not like in other societies? Tempers flare, positions harden, and the quest for global values is dealt a severe setback.

A contrasting suggestion for expanding the current “thin” list of universal human rights is put forward by Charles Taylor. In an article titled “Conditions of an Unforced Consensus on Human Rights” (in the edited book *The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights*), Taylor recognizes that different groups, countries, religious communities, and civilizations hold incompatible fundamental views on theology, metaphysics, and human nature. In response, he argues that a “genuine, unforced consensus” on human rights norms is possible only if we allow for disagreement on the ultimate justifications of those norms. Instead of condemning the values we do not like in other societies, we should leave open the possibility of mutual learning from each other’s “moral universe.” But differences will inevitably remain, and we should try to abstract from those differences for the purpose of working out an “overlapping consensus” of human rights norms. As Taylor puts it, “we would agree on the norms while disagreeing on why they were the right norms, and we would be content to live in this consensus, undisturbed by the differences of profound underlying belief.”

Contra Taylor, it may not be realistic to expect that people will be willing to abstract from the values they care deeply about during the course of a global dialogue on human rights. But this approach arguably holds more promise than the straightforward “condemnation” model advocated by Etzioni. Participants in multicultural dialogues need to identify areas of common ground rather than get bogged down by areas of difference. It is far easier to undermine than to build up trust between members of different societies, and the best way to undermine trust is to invoke contested foundational values. In short, those concerned with the quest for a truly global human rights regime should suppress, rather than encourage, the tendency to

condemn different values in different societies on the basis of their own “strong substantive values.”

Responsibilities: Their Use and Abuse

Many critics of the current “international” human rights regime, particularly in the non-Western world, have argued that the language of rights may not always be ideal for protecting the substantive human interests underlying human rights. For one thing, the term “rights” may sometimes have pejorative connotations in some societies, even among dissident intellectuals. Secondly, the language of rights seems to lend itself to the model of an individual exclusively concerned with seeking protection against an intrusive state. In the modern world, however, individuals also need to be concerned about abuses by corporations and other nongovernmental entities. Thirdly, relatively communitarian societies in East Asia and elsewhere often resort to nonjudicial remedies, such as informal negotiations and public education, for the purpose of securing vital human interests. Resorting to legally enforceable rights can sometimes undermine traditional (and effective) modes of conflict resolution. This is not to suggest that the language of rights should be entirely displaced in the quest for global values, but it may need to be complemented by the language of duties and virtues. The important point is to agree upon the need to secure vital human interests. The choice of rhetoric depends only upon practical concerns of effectiveness. Dogmatic emphasis upon rights can be unhelpful, even counterproductive.

These sorts of considerations converge with Etzioni’s argument that rights need to be balanced with responsibilities. In the American context, Etzioni has argued that an overemphasis on individual rights has led to unintended consequences, such as justifying the neglect of social responsibilities and weakening all appeals to rights by devaluing the really important ones. In response, he has argued for “a temporary moratorium on the minting of new rights.” At the international level, Etzioni has argued for an Asian sense of responsibility to combine with the Western notion of rights. This may be an admirable aim, but once again the implementation is fraught with potential difficulties.

Consider the attempt by a group of former heads of state to formulate “A Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities,” which was published in the Spring 1998 issue of *The Responsive Community*. This Declaration aims to complement the UDHR, but its probable effect will be to dilute it. Most of the Declaration consists of vacuous moralizing. Article 3 is not atypical: “Everyone has the responsibility to promote good and to avoid evil in all things.” Such platitudes are not necessarily harmful, but they may serve to draw attention away from the really important rights that do need to be enforced.

The more serious problem is that some sections of the Declaration would be politically dangerous if they were taken seriously. Consider Article 14: “The freedom of the media to inform the public and to criticize institutions of society and governmental actions, which is essential for a just society, must be used with responsibility and discretion. Freedom of the media carries a special responsibility for accurate and truthful reporting. Sensational reporting that degrades the human person or dignity must at all times be avoided.” It is interesting to note that the group of former heads of state includes Singapore’s Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who is still a dominant figure on the Singaporean political scene (not to mention the world stage). In Singapore, Lee has often advanced similar arguments about the need for “responsible” journalism that “at all times” avoids “sensational reporting that degrades the human person or dignity.” The result? Singaporean newspapers have been completely defanged. The *Straits Times*—once an admirably critical and well-respected source of news—has degenerated into the official cheerleader for the government’s policies.

Needless to say, I do not mean to imply that Etzioni himself endorses these abuses of the language of responsibility (or that publishing a document in *The Responsive Community* is necessarily an endorsement of all that it says). Nor are these criticisms meant to undermine the general point that there is a need to complement the language of rights in the quest for global values. But those who want to inject the language of responsibility into the international human rights regime should be aware that there are serious risks associated with trying to implement this desideratum in the real world.

Think Locally, Act Globally

It is my sincere hope that these obstacles to a truly international human rights and responsibilities regime can be overcome. Meanwhile, however, how should we respond to those who question the universality of contested values? What do we say to people from other cultures who question moral truths we take to be self-evident on the grounds that local constraints or cultural mores render them inapplicable in their own societies? One response is straightforward condemnation on the basis of one's own values. I have tried to show that this response may prove to be ineffective if not counterproductive. The opposite reaction—the relativist response—is to conclude that both viewpoints are equally valid, refrain from criticism of “the other,” and leave it at that. This response runs the risk of endorsing self-serving statements by authoritarian rulers who distort local cultural norms for their own dubious purposes.

Another response—perhaps it can be termed “culturally sensitive communitarianism”—is to refrain from judgment until one has learned enough about the other culture so as to be in a better position to make sound moral judgments. Culturally sensitive communitarianism can be demanding. It often requires learning another language and familiarization with the specific examples and argumentative strategies that another culture uses in everyday moral and political debate. It requires an open mind that does not foreclose the possibility of revising one's political ideals in response to an engagement with another culture. There is, however, no other path to effective and morally justified cross-cultural criticism.

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Rediscovering British Communitarianism

Henry Tam

Communitarian ideas have made an impact in the United Kingdom through three quite distinct channels. First, there is the philosophical tradition, which can be traced back to the last century and has remained prominent at Oxford. This tradition has produced a series of influential works concerned with the interrelated issues of responsibility, citizenship, and vibrant community life. Second, there is the circle of media opinion makers, which has responded enthusiastically to the communitarian ideas put forward by Amitai Etzioni. Third, there is the culture of active community development deriving from the cooperative ideals of Robert Owen, now carried forward by a number of key organizations in Britain. In this article, I aim to give an outline of each of these three strands, and comment briefly on the opportunities as well as the difficulties that lie ahead for the development of communitarian ideas and practices in the UK.

Let us begin with the rich communitarian tradition in British philosophy, which dates back to at least T.H. Green in the 19th century. This was significantly advanced by the New Liberals, most notably L.T. Hobhouse in the early 20th century, in their campaign to balance individual rights with social responsibilities. In so doing they helped to pave the way for a progressive welfare state to underpin stable community life. Both Green and Hobhouse were Oxford philosophers, and it is no coincidence that Oxford has continued to produce and attract successive generations of writers who are at the forefront of what is now frequently described as communitarian thinking. Since the early 1980s a number of them have specifically used the term “communitarian” to characterize their ideas. These include David Marquand, whose *Unprincipled Society* is an indictment of individualist free market politics; Jonathan Boswell, whose *Community and the Economy* gives a detailed exposition of how he believes a communi-

tarian economy should function; David Miller, whose *Market, State and Community* explores a communitarian form of market socialism; Elizabeth Frazer and Nicola Lacey, coauthors of *The Politics of Community*, which draws attention to what they call “dialogic communitarianism” and engages with feminist concerns; Antony Duff, who has written extensively about communitarian punishment; and my own attempts to provide a critical synthesis of past and present communitarian ideas. Other leading figures who taught or were educated at Oxford, and who have been associated with communitarian thinking even if they may not readily describe their ideas as such, include Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, Ralf Dahrendorf, John Gray, A.H. Halsey, and, of course, the British Prime Minister himself, Tony Blair.

In marked contrast to the diverse range of Oxford communitarian works, which over the last 20 years has established a bridgehead against both individualist and authoritarian thinking in nearly every field of social and political deliberations, the second channel for communitarian ideas in the UK—the British media—points to a single source, namely, Amitai Etzioni. In the early 1990s, the British media learned of the interest major politicians were taking in the ideas of Etzioni and suddenly there was an explosion of coverage of communitarianism as a brand new American invention to be imported into the UK. Etzioni’s views on parenting, volunteering, moral education, and crime all received particular attention. Etzioni himself was hailed as the founder of communitarian thinking. Since then the label “communitarian” has become attached to a range of public policies developed by the New Labour Government, such as the linkage of welfare payments to a commitment to seek employment, increased powers to reduce antisocial behavior, support for the discharging of parental responsibilities, and citizenship education. However, the British media conspicuously made no reference to the communitarian works that had long been in circulation in the UK, or to the fact that the inspiration for many of these policies had British as well as American origins. By seizing upon selected extracts from Etzioni’s writings and portraying all communitarians as being narrowly concerned with strengthening social and parental power to impose discipline, the media turned ‘communitarianism’ into an easy target for distortion and vilification.

The right-wing historian, Norman Stone, led the charge in 1994 when he wrote, “Communitarianism is, I am afraid, the device of yet another American sociologist who does not understand the past.” He

went on to suggest, quite absurdly, that it would lead to fascism. Later that same year left-wing social commentator Beatrix Campbell joined the attack. According to her, the communitarian movement was launched by “the former White House adviser Amitai Etzioni. It infuses the new traditionalism of Tony Blair, it is fielded by misogynists and moralists.” Then *The Economist* published an article, “Freedom and Community,” which outrageously claimed that what Etzioni and right-wing politicians like James Goldsmith and the Nazi pamphleteer Carl Schmitt had in common was that “they are all communitarians,” although some are more willing than others to act on their antiliberal beliefs and destroy individual freedom. Then the highly respected newspaper *The Guardian* published an article by Stephen Holmes under the title, “The Ku Klux Klan are a close-knit bunch too.” Holmes claims that “communitarians invest this word [community] with redemptive significance. When we hear it, all our critical faculties are meant to fall asleep. In the vocabulary of these antiliberals, ‘community’ is used as an anaesthetic, an amnesiac, an aphrodisiac.”

Oxford scholars like Stuart White and Stephen Howe have written to protest, in vain, that Etzioni’s ideas have much in common with British communitarian thinking (the latter having been developed to improve liberalism rather than oppose it) and that neither can reasonably be interpreted as an authoritarian doctrine. The refusal of the media to acknowledge this point has meant that, on the whole, British communitarian thinkers have distanced themselves from the “communitarian” label. Typically, a communitarian-minded philosopher like John Gray has written: “American communitarians—such as Amitai Etzioni...show their kinship with American libertarians, such as Charles Murray, who advocates removing welfare support from single-parent families.... This American diagnosis, which accepts market individualism without question or criticism while calling for the restoration of a form of family life that is irrecoverably gone, does not advance the British debate.” One of the distinctive elements in the writings of British communitarians like Marquand, Miller, and Boswell is precisely their radical critiques of market individualism.

If British communitarian thinkers have tended to turn away from the monolithic view of communitarianism created by the media, those at the forefront of the third channel of communitarian ideas have reacted with hostility. Following the tradition of moral education, cooperation, and community development which owed much to the

19th century reformist Robert Owen, organizations such as the Community Development Foundation (CDF), the Citizenship Foundation, Community Service Volunteers, the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation, and the Standing Conference for Community Development have been putting communitarian ideas into practice since long before the media interest in American communitarianism began. Their views are reflected by the following quote taken from a recent CDF publication, which equates communitarianism with the media image of Etzioni's ideas:

Community development faces up to the question of power and recognizes the relative powerlessness of marginalized groups; communitarianism is strangely silent on the subject.... Community development appreciates the importance of the issues of class, race and gender.... Communitarianism shows little interest in these themes, and is particularly vulnerable on the rights of women.... Community development has a long record of being radically progressive and democratic; communitarianism's inclination is to be conservative and authoritarian.

In fact, communitarian thinkers in the UK have always paid considerable attention to the concerns associated with community development in the CDF publication cited above. Community development organizations and British communitarian academics are only now beginning to appreciate each others' contributions, particularly through the work of the UK Communitarian Forum. However, it is difficult to predict if they will collaborate in reclaiming the communitarian banner for their ideas and practices. Although it was Robert Owen's ideas that, when they were imported into America in the late 19th century, first brought the term "communitarian" into common currency, the British media have, ironically, turned it into a label for their ambivalent interpretations of a single American writer. Etzioni has always maintained that each country will develop its own communitarian path. His visits to Britain have galvanized public as well as politicians' interests in communitarian issues. These interests are to be found in the current political attempt to invent "The Third Way" as a new label to bring together theorists and practitioners who want to challenge both authoritarian and individualist ideologies. Whether it will succeed as an inclusive movement, or simply rise and fall as yet another branding exercise by the inner circle of the New Labour Government, remains to be seen.

A Spanish Perspective on Communitarianism

José Pérez Adán

In February, 1996, Amitai Etzioni delivered a lecture at the Complutense University in Madrid. I had the opportunity to chat with him before and after the lecture and, as head of the Spanish Chapter of the Society for the Advancement of Socioeconomics, I was introduced to most of the relevant attendees. There was broad representation from Spanish academic life, as well as from different public institutions and political parties. I would like to focus on these two different groups to explain the interest and relevance of Etzioni's work, and of communitarian ideas in general, to Spain.

As far as my university colleagues are concerned, communitarian ideas shed little helpful critical light on Spain. Let us remember that Spanish society is—by constitution, tradition, and culture—an impressive embodiment of communitarian life. As evidence, consider first the family. Spain is undoubtedly the European country that relies most on the family, although not by law but by custom. All of my colleagues know that without the strong extended family unit the country would likely not have survived 20 years of steady 15 percent unemployment. Another sign of the strength of the Spanish family is that, among OECD countries, Spain has the lowest percentage of people over 65 living on their own or outside an active family unit (generally that of one of their sons or daughters). Such arrangements not only demonstrate the strength of the Spanish family, they also help foster intergenerational solidarity, a vital component of community at levels ranging from local to national.

Beyond the family, there is other evidence of the communitarian nature of Spanish society. While all cultures have their holidays and ceremonies, civic feasts and rituals play a particularly large role in

Spain, helping to further the process of community building. Also, social borders play a relatively small role in Spanish life, something one can easily observe with a visit to any city market. (This is likely significantly attributable to the intermingled nature of urban lodging in Spain, and to the existence of few minorities.) That same visit to the market could also reveal, if one is a good observer, the value Spaniards place on the care of children; the perils of childhood violence are essentially unknown here. Finally, it is worth noting that Spain has the most evenly distributed rent in Europe.

Understandably, thus, communitarianism has been seen, at first glance, as a good thing for the highly individualistic United States, but of little use to Spain. But societies are always on the move. Spanish society, as any other, is experiencing great changes. Many of these changes go precisely in the direction pointed to by the modern global economic culture; and many of the traits of this culture are what Spaniards call “cold”: individualism, exclusivism, and materialism. The effects of these changes may cause significant damage to the social fabric of a society that is not prepared (legally prepared) to protect those customs and traditions it previously took for granted.

This is the argument I present to my university colleagues to underline the importance of communitarian ideas, and of Etzioni’s work in particular. If we project some of the trends of the modern global culture—such as the deterioration of the family—onto present-day Spain, we see that there are grounds for concern. It is not unreasonable to infer that the enactment of certain communitarian policies and proposals are dearly needed to safeguard the future well-being of our society. Spain’s capacity for communal deterioration is, in this matter, higher than in other places: we have more to lose. The weakening of Spanish communal life will cause havoc, since we are much less prepared than others to undergo the perils of internal social isolation.

As for the politicians, in that lecture at the Complutense University there were members of the Fundación Sistema (linked to the Socialist Party) and of the Fundación Cánovas del Castillo (linked to the Popular-Conservative Party). Both foundations have shown an interest in communitarianism. I have had requests from both to give lectures on the topic (and, less encouragingly, the two seem quite

willing to seize any possible political gain they can by associating themselves with a philosophy that in recent years has acquired a significant level of importance in European politics.) But within this field, as in the academic arena, the interest in communitarian ideas has so far been quite shallow. There are prominent political figures, like Calvo Sotelo and Rodríguez Arana from the Popular Party and Ramón Jauregui and José Tezanos from the Socialist Party, that may call themselves communitarians from time to time; after all Kohl and Blair have done so too. But as is often the case in the power game, the vested electoral interests override political ideology.

I have painted a picture of a philosophy of significant potential value to Spain, but one that has thus far only achieved superficial acceptance. What can be done? The ideology of communitarianism is not unknown in Spain. The English editions of Amitai Etzioni's books are well known in academic circles and two books of mine—*Socioeconomía*, with a prologue by Etzioni, and *Sociología*, a manual of communitarian sociology—have been editorial successes. But still, communitarian thinking has not been locally rooted and nourished. For this, Spanish communitarians are largely to blame: we have not yet proposed a genuine local platform for a communitarian social program. (My forthcoming book, *The Social Health*, will hopefully partially fill this gap.)

The “translation” of communitarian ideas into the “language” of particular social environments is a priority for communitarians everywhere. How exactly might communitarian ideas be translated for Spain, taking into account its unique social and cultural circumstances? In the United States, Etzioni has placed an emphasis on family, schools, and neighborhoods. As I see it, the emphasis in Spain ought to be on four points:

- The family: Translating into law the importance that the family already has in social life, thus avoiding its progressive deterioration.
- Mobility: The revision of the migrant law common for all Europe, thus fostering an inclusive Europe that wherever possible recognizes freedom of movement and settlement, thus helping to promote social mobility.

- Political reform (fewer levels of government; direct democratic involvement when possible).
- Economic reform (communitarian economics).

In any case, the examples and insights of other countries are a valid tool for reflection. Etzioni himself has “translated” his own work for the benefit of the society he knows best. We can only hope that critics and philosophers in Spain and other countries, following this example, are equally capable of putting communitarian ideas within the reach of those with a direct impact on social and political policies.

FURTHER CHALLENGES

Making Communities More Responsive

Robert E. Goodin

Few people are privileged to launch their own “ism.” Communitarianism in its contemporary academic form is arguably just warmed-over Hegelianism. But Amitai Etzioni’s New Communitarianism is something genuinely new, or anyway certainly something that comes as news to contemporary social theorists.

The capstone of Etzioni’s political accomplishment is the “Responsive Communitarian Platform: Rights and Responsibilities” and the journal you are reading, which he founded to elaborate and promote this new brand of communitarianism. As is evident from the key terms that the platform and journal share, the emphasis is upon individual rights and responsibilities on the one hand, and the responsiveness of communities on the other.

As it has turned out, though, we have heard much about the former pair of notions and virtually nothing about the latter. Speaking as one—and, I daresay, for several—of the group of fifteen ethicists, social philosophers, and social scientists whose 1990 Washington, D.C. meeting Etzioni credits with founding the movement, I must say that the avoidance of this issue has been a source of unease, as the movement has trimmed its sails to the political realities and rhetorical needs of the New Democrats in the United States and New Labour in the United Kingdom.

For my own part, I was happy to be associated with the new journal on the understanding that it was to be a sort of left-wing *Public Interest*. No doubt Etzioni—like Anthony Giddens—would prefer to think we are “beyond left and right” nowadays. Still, I would like to take advantage of this birthday greeting to invite him to make good on that original commitment. I would like to offer him the opportunity, denied him by the practical political realities involved in launching a new movement in an era of retrograde politics, to elaborate further on the responsibilities that communities have toward their constituents and, most especially, to reflect upon the mechanisms that might make such communities truly responsive. I propose to develop this invitation by way of a series of connected reflections, recalling how Etzioni came to his present enterprise and how it articulates with other cognate projects.

Achieving ‘Responsiveness’

Etzioni’s original claim to academic fame, it bears recalling, was in the area of organizational sociology. There he argued against purely instrumental constructions of social organizations. Sometimes, at least, organizations embody a *Gemeinschaft* as well as a *Gesellschaft*. Sometimes, at least, they are the sorts of organizations to which their members might appropriately display commitment and loyalty of a not-just-instrumental sort. (This “loyalty and commitment” might of course be to the group’s underlying values, rather than just to the group or organization as such.)

One way of understanding Etzioni’s New Communitarianism is to say that he proposes to assimilate society as a whole to a work group at a well-organized Volvo factory or a cadre in a revolutionary movement. Of course Etzioni is at pains to acknowledge the values of diversity and pluralism within the sort of community he cherishes. Still, we might not go far wrong in supposing that the earlier project remains the main strategic thrust, and the later concession just constitutes something of a variation on that larger continuing theme. Tellingly, the relevant chapter of *The New Golden Rule* is entitled, “Pluralism *Within Unity*.” [emphasis added]

If Etzioni’s aim is indeed to create a community bound by loyalty, it is worth recalling the connection to Albert Hirschman’s famous

scheme, laid out in his 1970 book *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*. For Hirschman, loyalty serves at one and the same time to reduce exit and to increase voice. Translated into Etzioni's terms of 'rights and responsibilities,' voice amounts to the exercise of rights—rights to participate in the governance of our collective affairs, to make demands, and so on. In short, if it is loyalty and commitment that Etzioni wants, then more, not less, exercise of rights will (on at least one particularly plausible model) be the best means to achieve the desired end.

On the classically liberal account, for example, rights are what make communities responsive. In the first instance those are rights to participate. Giving people the vote, and making the political future of elites turn on the outcome of their votes, is a standard way of ensuring that the political system is systematically responsive to the community that it is supposed to serve. So too are rights to free speech, association, and assembly, which underpin the right to vote. Also ensuring responsiveness, although in a more roundabout way, are those rights of a more substantive sort that protect individuals against the incursions of political majorities.

No one would claim that those rights are never abused. But, I submit, no one has ever provided us with any remotely credible alternative for guaranteeing that communities will be systematically responsive to their constituent members. Insofar as the New Communitarian movement is supposed to accord equal (or more) emphasis to making communities responsive as to making individuals responsible (compliant), that seems to me to constitute a telling argument in favor of democratic rights across a wide spectrum.

While honoring people's rights is responsiveness of a sort, there is of course more involved in a state's responding to the needs, desires, and aspirations of its people than even the most enthusiastic rights theorist would care to couch in those terms. And there is even more, yet again, in a community's doing so. What more is involved is something that theorists of 'responsive communities' need to elaborate much further. My point here is merely that what is wanted is not a restriction of rights but rather 'rights plus something more.'

Having Rights but Not Pressing Them

The New Communitarian aim, as summarized in the subtitle of its journal, is to emphasize that rights are accompanied by responsibili-

ties. Of course rights theorists know only too well that one person's right is logically correlative with another person's duty to respect that right; no duties, no rights. And there are other similar logically imperative responsibilities: There are certain sorts of responsibilities that are the higher-order consequences of other people's rights. (One person's right to a trial by jury entails a responsibility on others to serve when called for jury duty: no one can have a jury trial if no one serves on juries.) There are other sorts of responsibilities that are the higher-order consequences of our own rights. (A right to vote entails a responsibility to actually bother voting: the electoral outcome cannot be taken to represent the view of the electorate—in a way that settles the matter—if turnout is too low.) And there are still other sets of responsibilities (such as those of grantees of public broadcasting licenses) that constitute a *quid pro quo* for being granted the right in the first place. Important though they are, these classes presumably would not exhaust the sorts of responsibilities that New Communitarians wish to impose on right-holders. The responsibilities to which New Communitarians point are clearly supposed to amount to more. But what that "more" amounts to—and how those further responsibilities are linked, logically or sociologically, to rights—is never quite clear.

Maybe the point is just that it is sometimes wrong for people to *press* their rights. Rights by their nature give you an option; and if from some larger moral point of view one fork of that choice is right while the other is wrong, then the right gives you a right to do wrong. Rights by their nature are trumps; and if one of the things they are capable of trumping is the collective determination of what is best for the community overall, then it is impossible for rights-respecting liberals to maximize collective welfare. Some would regard these as reasons not to give people the rights in the first place. But New Communitarians such as Etzioni are presumably not among them (they want 'rights *and* responsibilities').

Rights on this account might best be conceived as fall-backs, trump cards to be played in the last instance rather than the first. Certainly that is the way rights work in certain crucial circumstances. Consider marital relations. There, rights are something important to stand upon when affection breaks down and the marriage is being dissolved. But no marriage can long survive partners standing on their

rights day in and day out, in the course of their ordinary affairs. Likewise, business dealings are underwritten by contracts dictating how costs will be allocated among parties *in extremis*. But the give and take involved in doing business precludes quoting contract clauses at one another on a day-to-day basis. Maybe that is what the New Communitarians such as Etzioni ultimately mean to be saying: you should have rights, to be sure; you should just not have early and easy recourse to them, until other more non-aggressive avenues have been exhausted.

Moving Beyond the State

In *The New Golden Rule* Etzioni usefully draws attention to a blind spot in liberal theory. From the Magna Carta forward, we have concentrated upon state authority as the primary threat. Non-state actors can infringe on liberty, too, but there is relatively little liberals can do to prevent those infringements of liberty without infringing upon the liberties of others associated with such groups. Thus, in the same chapter of *On Liberty* in which Mill is railing against state interference with people's self-regarding actions he is also found accepting (rather less reluctantly than he might) the pressures that public opinion might bring to bear on nonconformists. Religious groups may be authoritarian, but by and large liberals content themselves merely with "disestablishing" them—making sure that whatever authoritarian tricks they get up to are not done in the name of the state or with power borrowed from it. Private clubs might be racist, but liberals tolerate that so long as no public money is involved. Families may be patriarchal and authoritarian, not to mention antisocial, but by and large liberals restrict themselves to policing just literally criminal assaults within them. And so on.

Etzioni's aim in drawing attention to non-statist forms of community was of course to disrupt old discourses and reorient social theory by recalling that there is (in a term highly fashionable in Blair's Britain) a "Third Way" between individualism and statism. His own purpose was of course to extol the virtues of that neglected possibility of community. But at the same time he has usefully reminded liberals of something else they should fear, too. Having spent a lot of time thinking of how to prevent abuses of state power, they need to give some thought to non-state power and its potential for abuse. Having

spent a fair bit of time thinking about how to ensure that state authority is responsive to those living under it, liberals now need to pause to consider what mechanisms might help to make non-state authority systematically responsive in similar ways.

We know how to do both things when it comes to state authority—through the institution of rights of just the sort Etzioni and his followers rather wish people would refrain from employing quite so aggressively. But our stylized ‘Mill’ and his followers have long been reluctant to give individuals rights against the various non-state communities—rights analogous to those individuals have against their states to participate in collective decision making and to prevent collective decisions from impinging too dreadfully upon their personal interests.

Juridical mechanisms like rights seem to work tolerably well to ensure responsiveness on the part of juridical entities like the state. For those genuinely interested in making communities responsive, the challenge is to find some analogous mechanism (juridical or otherwise) that is capable of ensuring the same results when it comes to non-juridical entities like non-state communities. If rights are not the answer (or anyway not the full answer), what is?

The question is genuine, not purely rhetorical. It points, I would suggest, to a task worthy of Etzioni’s energies and talents over the coming years. From where I sit, it seems to be the major piece of unfinished business in his New Communitarian agenda.

Amitai Etzioni: An American Individualist

Everett C. Ladd

It is far more than just a little ironic that Amitai Etzioni is recognized as the leading theorist of a movement known as “communitarian,” which is seen as challenging dominant strains in liberal individualism. He is in fact a leading contemporary interpreter and proponent of the American individualist tradition. The latter commitments are nowhere better seen than in his book, *The New Golden Rule*, and its thoughtful discussion of the importance of “the moral voice” in constituting a good society.

Etzioni rejects the idea that one can in the long run found and maintain a good society by trying to impose “proper” values and behavior on the people. His fundamental sense of a good society is one securely liberal and democratic. It requires a large measure of individual autonomy and freedom of choice. But it also requires that individuals frequently make good choices, and accept some measure of personal responsibility for society’s well-being. Like America’s founders, Etzioni believes that an individualist democracy cannot realize its promise without a moral and virtuous citizenry.

In the end what matters is that decisive numbers of ordinary people *freely choose* virtuous conduct, such as integrity, finding a balance between “me” and “us,” respect for others, and the like. “The main difference one finds among societies,” he writes, “is the extent to which they rely on informal social mechanisms and what I shall call the moral voice, versus on the state and its coercive tools of law enforcement. Good societies rely much more heavily on the moral voice than on coercion.”

This points to the continuing challenge facing liberal democracies. Such systems happily reject any notion of trying to force people to be

free, i.e., to impose “right” conduct. But they are left with the demanding task of helping citizens, by themselves, to choose the right. Not surprisingly, we are often disappointed by shortcomings in the response. Etzioni’s work is guided by a fundamental question: How can these shortcomings be minimized, their effects mitigated? If the only good society is one where ordinary people freely choose the right, how to organize it to help them do so is the whole ball game.

Etzioni clearly believes that individuals begin life with a capacity for a sense of virtue, and an inclination to pursue it. He calls this the “personal moral voice.” It defines what “I believe that I ought to.” Understandings of what is right evolve in certain regards over time and from one culture to another, but there are profound continuities and commonalities. We may refuse to follow what our inner voice tells us we should do, but most of us rarely fail to hear it. As to the inclination to pursue it, I know that I have never in my life done what I “heard” to be right and afterwards felt bad about it. But I have often done something I understood to be wrong and have always seen it to be such. These responses are in part autonomous—independent of external rewards or punishments.

But, Etzioni understands, this personal moral voice, this God-given capacity to distinguish right from wrong, needs assistance—which is where society comes in. A good society depends on shared norms and on social institutions that sustain our better natural inclinations. A vital moral voice in the community reinforces individuals’ inherent personal moral voice. Unfortunately, some societies fail to provide such support and instead in varying degrees discourage individuals’ pursuit of the right. Some of their central institutions may reward or at least countenance conduct that has disastrous social results.

Etzioni believes that in highly individualist societies like the United States, such problems are likely to come from carrying claims of individual rights and entitlements too far. In this he joins ranks with many of his contemporaries, including other distinguished social analysts such as Robert Bellah, Jean Bethke Elshtain, and Mary Ann Glendon. Individuals need others. Many of the things that we require are more difficult or even impossible to obtain when we come to see ourselves as too radically autonomous—an argument that Bellah and

his colleagues advanced brilliantly through their research for *Habits of the Heart*. Above all we need the sustenance and support of successfully functioning families.

Most of Etzioni's recent work, including *The New Golden Rule*, falls right in the middle of the debate over the legacy of "the Sixties." Like many other critics, he sees the decade encapsulating extensions of individualism—especially in sexual norms and conduct and family life—that have been profoundly injurious: growing numbers of children born out of wedlock, levels of divorce and family breakup far exceeding those of any previous period, children raised increasingly in single-parent households with high rates of both material and psychological deprivation. He sees some movement in recent years away from the thinking that encourages these excesses—"the 1990s curl back"—but not nearly enough.

Thus, though he is a strong proponent of the type of society that emphasizes individual rights and autonomy, Etzioni argues that present-day experience calls upon us to explore and explain why individualist America would benefit from a de-emphasis of the "me" and from less of what Glendon has called "rights talk." It is often necessary, he writes, for those who are "socially aware and active...to throw themselves to the side opposite that toward which history is tilting"—and America now tilts toward an excessively narrow and insufficiently disciplined individualism. Given this, the friend of an individualist society must be its clear-eyed critic. The contemporary United States needs to strengthen social institutions, from the family to the broader community. And, minimizing coercion, it should do more to encourage individuals to listen to their inner moral voice and better appreciate the need for self-imposed limits.

With all this, I agree. And Etzioni has cast much of the argument with balance, moderation, and disciplined intelligence.

Tocqueville Revisited

My one large quarrel with Etzioni is that he sometimes describes individualism as inherently flawed and incomplete—even though, as I have noted, his concept of a good society is entirely rooted in liberal democracy, which is to say, in individualism. He refers to a supposed choice between "curtailing individualism" and "reestablishing vir-

tues.” He often equates individualism with extreme libertarianism—even though the latter is entirely outside the mainstream understanding and experience of individualist America. He suggests that “individualists” champion unrestricted individual autonomy, “social conservatives” champion social order, while conveniently, between these extremes “lies communitarian thinking, which characterizes a good society as one that achieves balance between social order and autonomy.”

In fact, it is precisely American-style individualism that historically has sought a balance between social order and autonomy, and a nurturing of social institutions from the bottom up. Alexis de Tocqueville, for example, saw individualist societies as the wave of the future, feared their possible excesses, and sought to learn from early American experience whether a proper balance could be achieved. His verdict in *Democracy in America* is that the United States had found the means for appropriate limits: strong religious institutions that subordinated individuals to something larger than themselves; strong communities as the center of self-government; and above all the vigorous engagement of individuals with others for all manner of social causes and improvements. The country he described in the 1830s was—though he did not use the term—profoundly communitarian. Americans had found a way, Tocqueville argued, to make individualism serve collective or community ends.

In one of his most famous passages, he wrote that “in the United States associations are established to promote public safety, commerce, industry, morality, and religion.... The Americans make association to give entertainments, to found seminaries, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; in that manner they found hospitals, prisons, and schools.... There is no end which the human will despairs of attaining through the combined power of individuals united into a society....” Tocqueville saw, correctly I believe, American individualism as the ally, not an opponent, of a communitarian ethos.

In our own day, political theorist Michael Novak makes a similar argument, though from a different vantage point. He discusses, in *The Fire of Invention*, how individualist energies accruing from American ideas and historical experience have fueled extraordinary economic

achievements. “For Americans, it is natural to think that the cause of the wealth of nations is inventiveness. American laws, American traditions, American customs, American habits—are all geared toward innovation. The world Americans live in is awash with new products and of new services, new machinery, new devices....” Novak argues that American-style individualism is a major resource for such developments benefiting the broader community because it starts from the premise that the individual cannot succeed apart from a successful community. “Many analysts go awry,” Novak observes, “in arguing that under the capitalism of the Rhine [German or Continental style] the collective is preeminent, whereas under Anglo-American capitalism there prevails the jungle of the anarchic individual. On the contrary, in America the *argument* nearly always centers on the general welfare, and when a majority can be persuaded that a special interest is hurting too many others, its entitlements are almost certain to be renegotiated.”

Of all contemporary theorists, Peter F. Drucker has, I think, put it best. In America, he wrote in *The Ecological Vision: Reflections on the American Condition*, there is “a fundamental belief in the individual, his strength, his integrity and self-reliance, his worth in the American tradition. But this ‘individualism’ is much less peculiar to this country—and much less general—than its (usually overlooked) collectivism. Only it is not the collectivism of organized governmental action from above. It is a collectivism of voluntary group action from below.” The tradition of “collectivist individualism” that Tocqueville, Drucker, Novak, and many other observers have seen as dominant in the American experience is entirely compatible with Etzioni’s communitarian values and the social/political agenda he prescribes.

American individualism surely has not avoided an excessively narrow sense of the self; it has not precluded assertions of radical individual autonomy that disparage needs that can be met only through properly constituted collectivities. Still, from the outset, an overriding feature of our ideological tradition has been recognition of the central importance of a vigorous and richly pluralist array of social institutions if we are to honor what we deem individuals’ sacred claims to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The current debate on the health of civic America has, I believe, suffered from insufficient recognition of the strength and persistence of our historic collective individualism as a civic resource. Its continued vitality in contemporary society will only be diminished if it is seen somehow as antithetic to community needs and interests. Today, as historically, American individualism aspires to communitarian values.

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Tough Questions for Liberal Communitarians

Benjamin R. Barber

Amitai Etzioni has been a communitarian pioneer, not simply because he has been a communitarian—many have preceded him—but because he has adapted communitarian ideas to the purposes of concrete and non-reactionary public policy, even as he has labored to harmonize a communitarian interest in civic responsibility with a liberal concern for individual rights. He has fostered a relatively progressive communitarian agenda and managed to wrest from the Right its sense of proprietorship over communitarian ideas. Alive to those concerned with the protection of privacy and individual liberty, he has nonetheless insisted that communities also have rights, and has challenged the individual rights absolutism that sometimes clouds the judgment of liberal organizations, such as the ACLU, that rely entirely on judicial discretion.

Despite these ample accomplishments, perhaps in part because of them, his communitarian vision faces tough challenges (some of which I have tried to describe in *A Place for Us: How to Make Society Civil and Democracy Strong*). Etzioni is a tolerant and engaging interlocutor—perhaps too much so, as I shall suggest below—and I know these are concerns he also shares. But it may be useful in honoring him to focus here on three challenges of relevance to all communitarians: the challenge of making communities voluntary and solidaristic; the challenge of balancing individuals and the community; and the challenge of dealing with the impact on minorities of majoritarian and hegemonic communities. Although Etzioni certainly acknowledges and treats these issues as challenges, notably in *The New Golden Rule*, he fails to take their full measure.

Making Communities More Voluntary

How can we distinguish those forms of community (and the rights that attach to them) associated with hierarchy and ascriptive identity that are often in tension with openness, inclusion, and equality, from those forms of community (and the rights that attach to them) associated with inclusiveness and equality? There are obviously 'good' and 'bad' varieties of community, which, depending on our normative scales, might lead us (for example) to condemn the Ku Klux Klan (despite its potential for solidarity, intimacy, and fraternity) and celebrate the NAACP (despite its less solidaristic character).

The communities we choose (voluntaristic) are often, precisely because they are chosen, "thinner," and hence less binding and rewarding than those that choose us as a consequence of who we are. To opt only for voluntary communities may seem to exclude those forms of association that are most affecting and solidaristic; yet to opt for communities of ascription may commit us to hierarchical and inegalitarian groups whose identity depends on the demonization of "others." Making such distinctions requires that we move beyond the criteria produced by community and in effect judge communities by other political or moral criteria.

In *The New Golden Rule*, Etzioni implicitly does just this—"members of constituting communities need to combine their appreciation of a commitment to their own particular traditions, cultures, and values, with respect for those of others," he writes—but he does not seem to notice that in doing so he subordinates communitarianism to another prior value, in this case tolerance, which becomes a constraint and limit on the category "community." Communities that cannot or will not respect other communities are presumably pushed outside the pale; which is to say, they are being judged by a criterion other than their intrinsic character as a community. It is not clear to me that the communitarian movement as it has been conceived by Etzioni has always been willing to face this dilemma and the tough choices it poses.

Take another example: religion. Good liberal that he is, he allows that communitarian positions can come "from religious values *and* from secular sources" [emphasis added]. But the consequence of holding a religious position—say, in the case of euthanasia—is usually

to insist that the exercise of “choice” is actually a form of suicide or (with assistance) homicide. Can the religious communitarian who abhors euthanasia really be expected to “dialogue” in the appropriately secular manner with Dr. Kavorkian?

Too often Etzioni bridges the chasm between hard choices by enumerating *all* the possibilities and then embracing them all—as if making a list of alternatives were the same thing as reconciling the radical differences they represent. He acknowledges “the more heterogeneous a society, the greater the challenge of keeping intergroup autonomy bounded within an overarching society,” but goes on to have it both ways: if communitarianism’s “core elements” include democracy as a value, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights as a framework, layered loyalties (identity pluralism), the values of tolerance and respect, a limitation of identity politics, and society-wide dialogue and reconciliation, then we can have heterogeneity and keep our communitarianism. But these core elements are hardly items on a cafeteria menu, to be picked at random and put on the communitarian tray. Rather, they are competing values often in tension or contradiction with one another. Layered loyalty undermines a specific community identity, tolerance may attenuate solidarity, limiting identity politics undercuts community, and the Bill of Rights is a document that fortifies individuals against communities. Sure it is nice to honor all these liberal values, but how does a communitarian do it and remain a communitarian?

Maintaining the Dialectic between Individual and Community

Similar problems are even more evident in Etzioni’s response to the second challenge. A progressive communitarianism will want to mediate the individual and groups, refusing to make the annihilation of individuals and their rights a condition for the prioritizing of communities and their rights, even as group rights and responsibilities are stressed in a society that had heretofore ignored them. The idea is to *balance* the demands of both, understanding that every community is comprised of individuals with distinctive rights, but that individuals are always embedded in communities and define their rights partly in relationship to their communities and the responsibilities associated with them. So far so good.

In practice however, many policy debates turn on making a hard choice between alternatives for which there is no reasonable mean. For example, a communitarian may deplore the hard choice that defines the antagonism between women who want to maintain privacy in choosing to keep or abort a fetus and those who believe the unborn have rights that the state must protect. But while a conciliator like Jean Bethke Elshtain may agree that each side has a part of the truth, in legislative terms we are eventually forced to embrace or condemn laws that prohibit abortion. Communitarian rhetoric may soften the debate and enlarge the compass of understanding, but can it contribute to the hard choice? Or does it finally end either sliding back into cultural and religious conservatism, or sliding out of communitarianism into a reluctant liberalism?

The “liberal communitarian” is an attractive ideal, but in policy terms it may be an oxymoron. Overcoming the incommensurability of liberal and community values requires more than enumerating a list of norms and pledging allegiance to them.

Communitarian Majoritarianism

Communitarians quite properly focus on the rights and responsibilities of a “community,” but in fact it is the dominant or majority community of which they often speak. As a consequence, despite the rhetoric of group rights, marginalized minorities may see in communitarian values a preference for a dominant or even hegemonic community and resist communitarianism as part of a rhetoric of oppression. Historically, minorities have found support in the judiciary and drawn succor from a rhetoric of individual rights that served to contain majoritarian impulses. In challenging the judicial enforcement of individual rights, communitarians may be challenging the primary instrument by which minorities are protected.

It is of course true that in the absence of genuine democratic support for minority rights, judicial activism may not only inflame public passion but be ineffective as a tool of social justice—which is the claim of those who think that bussing failed because it rode roughshod not only over actual communities but over the idea of community participation (via democratic institutions) in the policy-making that affects where people live and where their children are schooled. Yet in

light of the intractability of racism in America, and in the face of an unwillingness by the majority community to come to terms with the claims of minorities, an attack on judicial activism and on rights rhetoric may in fact be deeply prejudicial to minorities. There are many leading African-American scholars who are troubled by a pure rights approach, and some who have even embraced more conservative approaches to the amelioration of racial difficulties; but precious few have spoken as communitarians against the language of individual rights—even though the language of responsibility and citizenship resonates with their thinking. This ought to be a cause for unease and reexamination among progressive communitarians.

Once again, Etzioni seems to face up to the challenge by trying to elude its stark antinomies. The whole object of *The New Golden Rule* is to reconcile universalist rights and the demands of particularist communities. But particularism is very demanding! Etzioni cites Joseph de Maistre uncritically, even approvingly, in his critique of the abstractness of universal personhood—but de Maistre was a Catholic reactionary who despised everything the liberal Enlightenment and the French Revolution stood for. It may be “highly necessary *to combine some universal principles with particularistic ones to form a full communitarian normative account*,” but if this means combining de Maistre and, say, Voltaire or John Locke, then liberals beware! And of course “necessary” does not mean possible.

In the final sentence of *The New Golden Rule*, Etzioni writes that the “communitarian paradigm entails a profound commitment to moral order that is basically voluntary, and to a social order that is well balanced with socially secured autonomy”—this being what he means by the “new golden rule.” A commitment to moral order that is voluntary, however, may be less profound than one that is a consequence of revelation or that is inherited. Choosing our beliefs certainly enhances autonomy, but the entire sociological tradition to which Etzioni is heir, from Tocqueville and Nietzsche to Tönnies and Weber, teaches the story of religion’s subversion by reason and faith’s undoing by choice. The demystification that came with enlightenment, and the disenchantment of the world occasioned by rationalist autonomy, were both quite good for liberty, but far less beneficial to religion and community.

These three challenges, then, are pertinent issues for communitarians of Etzioni's commitments not because these communitarians have ignored issues of inclusiveness, equality, and social justice, but precisely because they care about them. However, it is not enough to care, or to preach dialectic. The hard labor of philosophical reconciliation has to be undertaken. Faced with the irreconcilability of A *or* B, we cannot simply announce, "how about A *and* B?" Just how difficult the task is may be signalled by Alan Gewirth's new book *The Community of Rights* in which the author attempts a careful and modest reconciliation of community and rights, but in which he acknowledges at the very outset that those who challenge the "adversarial conception" that pits rights against community all too often fail to interpret community "in the extensively cooperative, mutualist sense that underlies the asserted opposition between community and rights."

It seems an odd thing to say, but in trying to reconcile community and liberalism, Amitai Etzioni may not only not be taking liberty and its demands seriously enough, he may not be taking community and its demands seriously enough either. What seems apparent is that when we take both autonomy and community as seriously as radical individualists and traditional communitarians take them, it is extremely difficult to bridge the gulf between them. I am glad Etzioni continues to try. So do I. I am not sure we have yet succeeded.

A Saint on Every Corner

When asked about the likelihood of getting into heaven, 87 percent of those polled thought that they themselves would get in. Only 79 percent thought that Mother Theresa would.

U.S. News and World Report, *March 31, 1997*

Roadblocks on the Deliberative Path

Dennis Chong

The communitarian program described in *The New Golden Rule* aims to strengthen social responsibility, community bonds, and individual commitment to collective norms. It builds on what has traditionally been called a “sociological” theory of action, according to which behavior is motivated by internal norms and values rather than by the costs and benefits of prospective choices. Professor Etzioni favors using the institutions and mechanisms of socialization to inculcate social values and a “moral voice” in people. Those who are guided by this inner moral voice conform to community norms out of a sense of duty rather than for instrumental reasons; they do the right thing because it feels right to do so, and this internal reward is sufficient incentive. “The social order can rely, to a significant extent, not on compensating the actors for their social efforts, or on policing them, but on ‘socializing’ them to believe in the values the community seeks to uphold. To maintain a social order requires continued reinforcement of internalized values.”

A second element of the communitarian program calls for popular participation in deciding on the nature of the values that ought to be shared by members of the community. Through such moral dialogues, a community arrives at “social formulations of the good.” It follows, however, that the more resolutely people are motivated by deeply ingrained values, the harder it may be for them to engage in a dialogue about the relative merits of their values. A large literature in social psychology and political science, for example, argues that many ideological values, group identifications, and racial attitudes that are acquired during childhood socialization prove to be relatively immune to subsequent influences over the life span. There is therefore a paradox in a communitarian program that combines intensive social-

ization with extensive deliberation over the norms and values that should mold individual character and behavior: To the extent that values are successfully internalized, they become less subject to challenge and more likely to be accepted and defended on faith. Long-term compliance, in turn, causes people to develop a stake in the norms and values that organize a community, making it increasingly difficult for them to compromise on their beliefs. Deliberation may therefore be unable to bridge disagreements over social norms and values that have been strongly internalized.

The point that I am making is both logical and empirical. I fully concur that any social order that relies primarily on policing and monitoring of behavior rather than voluntary or socialized compliance is fragile. I also agree that, in practice, people are sometimes capable of reflecting upon and changing their values. But such value change is possible only when values have not been so internalized through socialization and social conformity that they are articles of faith. If people are open-minded and amenable to changing their views based on new information, they are by definition less wedded or “socialized” to internal norms and values. We can expect that such individuals will also be less inclined to subscribe to the collective good unless there are incentives to do so. They will sometimes display the kind of socially costly self-interested behavior that troubles communitarians.

Etzioni tries to address this problem by calling for *prior* moral dialogues about the particular values that individuals should be socialized to believe in. Using these dialogues, society reaches a consensus about the kinds of values that will be promoted in families and schools and that will be reinforced by communities and the society as a whole. Unfortunately, debates over values do not begin at the beginning, with all groups contributing equally to their formulation. Rather, people bring to the table existing convictions about the kinds of norms and values that are essential to personal development and social order. Furthermore, we enter into any debate with imbalances of power and status in society, and one’s relative position within this society will understandably influence where one wishes to draw the balance between individual freedom and community control. When the norms operate to the satisfaction of the majority, the majority will have every incentive to defend community values and restrict non-

conformity. On the other hand, groups that are disadvantaged by existing norms will have less incentive to abide by them.

Irreconcilable Differences

An actual example should help illustrate some of the difficulties of resolving value disputes through community deliberation. A few years ago I travelled to Williamson County, Texas, to study a local imbroglio over a decision by county commissioners to deny tax breaks to Apple Computer, a decision prompted by the company's policy of extending health insurance benefits to unmarried domestic partners of employees, including homosexuals. The commissioners' vote was soon reversed, but not before stirring controversy among county residents over how moral concerns should be balanced against economic goals. The ensuing debate, however, did little to inform people or to change their minds. Rather, it tended to crystallize existing disagreements.

Apple's opponents argued that the company's domestic partners policy would attract people who threatened to disrupt the relatively homogeneous, conservative Williamson County community. Sometimes their arguments were made in broad, unspecific terms that reflected an uncomplicated religious proscription against homosexuality. ("We've rejected God." "That's one of the things that is pretty much outlined [in the Bible] as taboo.") Other times, people revealed that they were simply afraid of homosexuals and did not want them as neighbors in their community. ("I think homosexuality is an abomination.") People also justified their position by saying that homosexuality was immoral. ("Fornication outside of marriage is wrong, whether it's with a man and a woman or two men or two women.") These comments suggest that people's policy positions were determined by their opposition to homosexuality and that further discussion was superfluous. Some citizens of Williamson were convinced that there could be no compromise between their moral principles and competing goals because, in their view, such moral principles were by definition absolute and therefore trumped other factors. For these individuals, morality did not involve calculation of the costs and benefits of supporting a particular norm.

There were also sharp disparities in how people assessed the costs and benefits of the Apple project. Both sides emphasized the benefits

associated with their position while downplaying the costs. People thus showed the kinds of perceptual biases that are well documented in the psychological literature on social cognition. Apple's supporters focused on the substantial multiplier effect of attracting new development to the community: the tax base is broadened; schools are helped; payrolls are increased; money is funneled to stores in the community; other retail outlets will be attracted to the area leading to further improvements in the tax base. They did not commonly entertain costs associated with economic and population growth such as pressure on the school system, crowding, and a weakening of community bonds. They dismissed what they considered to be a small vocal minority that resisted the development, even though survey evidence suggested that almost 40 percent of the population opposed tax abatements for Apple. Opponents of Apple, in contrast, worried about how economic development might attract the wrong kinds of people to their community. They perceived a correlation between homosexuality and AIDS, crime, pornography, and licentiousness. And they acknowledged few economic benefits in the Apple project.

Many Williamson County residents also offered *communitarian* reasons to draw their membership criteria narrowly rather than broadly. Opponents tended not to rest their case simply on the argument that homosexuality is morally wrong. Rather they associated homosexuality with a breakdown of the moral consensus that they assumed was required for social order and material growth. People justified their moral beliefs by referring to the functional consequences of uniting around those beliefs: in communities that share a consensus around social and moral values there is more trust and familiarity; people can predict what others will do; there is less friction in social interaction; people come to each other's assistance; communication is facilitated; and social coordination is possible. In turn, coordination around common social and moral values not only increases trust and smooths social interaction, but lays the foundation for harmonious business relationships, unified political action, and collective action on behalf of community goals. In general, there are much higher transaction costs living in a community in which people with different values are regularly at odds. Achieving cultural harmony therefore simultaneously improves group and individual well being. The group is better off when everyone coordinates around the

same values because, as a result, it is able to act for collective ends; at the same time, individuals are better off conforming to community norms because they can then enjoy the fruits of social coordination.

The Potential for Separatism

Communitarians are wary of a society that maintains so many restrictive norms that it becomes suffocating and authoritarian and ends up compromising individual freedom. The intent of the new golden rule is to strike a balance between individual freedom and conformity to community norms: the individual should respect the community's values to the same extent that he wishes the community to respect his autonomy. One check against oppression is to have a pluralism of groups. Communities are best when they are not unitary and homogeneous, but when they are comprised of overlapping networks that share common though not identical values so that an individual can choose to opt out of a disagreeable environment.

Fidelity to the new golden rule, however, may not be achievable in certain cases, most obviously when the community's norms expressly disapprove of certain forms of personal belief and behavior (even if such behavior is not legally proscribed). In such instances, one cannot exercise one's personal liberty without treading on the community's values. Individual freedom and conformity to the norm that restricts that freedom cannot simultaneously be upheld. One wonders, for example, how gays and lesbians in Williamson County can both live the kinds of lives they desire and yield to the norms and values of the more conservative members of the community. Instead, they will either have to transform the social norms of the community through collective action or move to the nearby liberal Austin community. But, to borrow from Albert Hirschman's terminology, the excessive use of "exit" as opposed to "voice" subverts the spirit of the new golden rule and undermines the communitarian ideal of reconciling tolerance with social control.

Tension between majority and minority norms of course is often the impetus behind the formation of separate communities. When there are multiple conventions or when people disagree over which norm should govern their community, there are various responses—ranging from tolerance and accommodation to consensus around a

common norm. Preferences among these potential solutions are likely to depend on whether one is a member of the majority or the minority culture. This will obviously be the case when norms and values are perceived to be tendentious rather than neutral, operating in favor of certain groups in society and at the expense of others. In these circumstances the majority will have less incentive to change and will try to regulate the degree of nonconformity in its environment. The majority may try to build barriers between itself and the minority culture; or it may use incentives and sanctions in an attempt to convert the minority to the majority culture. The American melting pot has always assumed that new immigrants would shed their old country ties and loyalties and conform to Anglo-American culture. While there has been greater recognition of late of the rights of minority groups to preserve certain aspects of their culture (especially in their private lives), and of the value of doing so for the dominant culture, there has not been acceptance of the idea that such groups can create parallel political and social institutions across the board.

Conformity to majority group norms depends on whether individuals believe that it is worthwhile for them to pay the price of membership. For reasons of capacity or cost, some individuals may regard the demands of conformity to be excessive and may elect instead to change social spheres rather than to comply. Attempts to convert individuals will therefore produce a degree of group segregation as long as there are viable alternatives available for individuals who choose not to comply. Minorities without sufficient incentives to join the mainstream because they are in some sense stigmatized by the majority culture will separate themselves and form communities that will provide them with status and social and material benefits.

The majority would like the minority to fit in, but socialization requires contact and interaction so there would need to be a transition period that is costly. Segregation and compartmentalization of nonconformists may be more expedient. Therefore it is incumbent upon the majority to tolerate the disruption that characterizes this transition while the level of nonconformity diminishes over time. But carrot and stick campaigns to convert nonconformists that are light on incentives—e.g., not accompanied by equal-status membership—will not meet with great success unless they are coercive.

Conclusion: The Irony of Community Harmony

Though I sympathize with communitarian calls for social responsibility, civility, unselfish behavior, and greater social consensus, disagreements abound regarding particular routes to achieving these values. Different social groups have different conceptions of the collective interest and will envision, based on contrasting ideological values, different routes to teaching civility, different limits of social control, different ideas about the kinds of behavior that detract from the collective welfare, and different public policies for achieving these ideals. It will be a challenge to establish consensus on these issues through deliberative processes because normative discussions are clouded by rationalization, ethnocentrism, and vested interests in existing norms that raise the odds against open discourse and consensus building.

Strongly internalized values can reduce the influence of deliberation, reinforcing biases rather than opening minds to alternative ideas. I was struck by the limited degree to which Williamson County residents felt that dialogue was helpful. On the contrary, residents actually expressed *displeasure* in holding arguments and debates with people who did not share their moral and political views. Information about the issues being debated was generally not perceived to be neutral, but was evaluated according to its source and through the prism of one's own social and political beliefs. *Discussion therefore tended to harden initial political attitudes and sharpen differences, rather than move the community closer to consensus.*

One of the consequences of competing lifestyles and social norms is that there is a tendency for individuals to seek refuge in separate communities, each defined by its own norms and values. Distinct group norms and belief systems therefore have a way of sorting out individuals and keeping them apart. These communities in turn nurture vested interests in one's own norms and values as well as beliefs in the essential virtues of one's own culture. In this manner, the choices and commitments made in the course of the socialization process to a system of beliefs, values, and group affiliations also builds resistance to change and produces conflict between competing ways of life.

This turn of events is ironic because conformity pressures coordinate preferences and behavior and facilitate harmonious social exchange, yet convergence *within* groups also invariably sharpens boundaries *between* groups, creating conflicts of interest if not animosities. One might locate the root of these conflicts in contrasting values and group identities, but that is only part of the story, and not the essential part. As I have written elsewhere, it is not the differences between values *per se* that create friction between groups, but rather the material and social consequences of those value differences.

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Commitment, the Multiple-Self Approach, and Communitarianism

Elias L. Khalil

In *The Moral Dimension*, Amitai Etzioni challenges the neoclassical paradigm, the dominant paradigm in economics, for stressing pleasure utility while ignoring moral motivation. He offers a “codetermining theory” which highlights moral motivation as being as important and valid as pleasure utility. Etzioni launches three major attacks on the neoclassical paradigm. First, the paradigm drastically fails to consider that human behavior is motivated by moral commitment as much as it is motivated by utilitarian calculation of cost and benefit. Second, even in the case of cost-benefit calculation, humans act more out of emotions and value judgments than out of detached, cool calculations of the most efficient means. Third, human preferences and tastes are not as entirely exogenous as assumed by the neoclassical approach. While individuals have predispositions, their preferences are greatly formed by the social context and the communities within which they are anchored—what Etzioni calls the “I&We” communitarian view. The “I&We” highlights

the assumption that individuals act within a social context, that this context is not reducible to individual acts, and, most significantly, that the social context is not necessarily or wholly imposed. Instead, the social context is, to a significant extent, perceived as a legitimate and integral part of one’s existence, a We, a whole of which the individuals are constituent elements.

I will not attempt here to summarize the many issues that Etzioni tackles, such as whether instrumental rationality (i.e., acting efficiently) is an ingrained predisposition or a learned one or whether the neoclassical paradigm can capture economic and political power. I restrict my discussion first to commitment and Etzioni’s multiple-self

approach. I then ask whether the multiple-self view necessarily entails the I&We paradigm. Finally, I draw some conclusions concerning Etzioni's vision of the "We."

Morality: Binding versus Nonbinding

Etzioni criticizes heavily the unitary-self paradigm of neoclassical economics. Such a paradigm views humans as motivated exclusively to maximize pleasure utility. Of course, neoclassical economists recognize that agents risk their lives to save others, give charity to the poor, share their income with their children, and act honestly even when no one is watching. However, as Etzioni notes, neoclassical economists model such acts as no different from the purchase of clothes or the enjoyment of a vacation, i.e., such acts are ultimately geared to satisfy one's pleasure. For the unitary-self view, if one risks one's life to save someone else's life, one must have a high taste for the other's consumption or for afterlife consumption; if one donates resources to the poor, one must enjoy watching their utility more than the alternative; if one acts honestly for no pecuniary gain, one must have a high price for honesty because there must be a price beyond which one would cheat.

Etzioni marshals many observations to document the importance of the moral dimension. But what matters more is his proposal of a theory to challenge the unitary-self view. Etzioni argues that observed moral behavior stems from "moral utility," which is radically distinct from the economist's pleasure utility. Moral utility, Etzioni asserts, cannot be reduced to pleasure utility. But what makes particular acts moral? Guided by writings in ethical philosophy, Etzioni articulates four criteria: "moral acts reflect an imperative, a generalization, and a symmetry when applied to others, and are motivated intrinsically." The imperative quality entails that actors feel that they "must" behave in the prescribed way. The generalization attribute supposes that actors appeal to general rules to justify their actions. The symmetry criterion implies that actors concede to other people under the same circumstances the same right or standing they demand for themselves. The intrinsic motivation requirement means that the primary motive behind a moral act is the expressed motive rather than the enhancement of self-serving interests. This does not mean moral acts have to be pure. Many of them can be composites, as when one donates money to charity out of altruism as well as out of concern for social status. However, analytically, the claim here is that one can isolate the moral motive as separate and independent from other motives.

However, many acts that Etzioni considers to be moral, such as altruism and saving money for one's descendants, do not comply with his four criteria. Altruism in the sense of charity can be motivated intrinsically, but it is neither imperative, generalized, nor symmetric. An agent may donate money to a homeless shelter without the compulsion to the "must," without abiding by a generalized rule of morality, and without the demand that others with similar circumstance should donate equal amounts of resources. In fact, most acts of charity are left to voluntary initiative, neither required by law nor enforced by the threat of social ostracism. Further, saving behavior and the bequeathing of wealth to offspring can be intrinsically motivated, but they are neither imperative, generalized, nor symmetric. Saving behavior and the bequeathing of wealth, similar to charity, are rather what I coin "nonbinding" moral acts. In contrast, "binding" moral acts are acts, such as honesty and fairness, that meet Etzioni's four criteria. When one resists the temptation of a bribe out of *intrinsic* motivation, one is meeting the *imperative*, *generalization*, and *symmetric* criteria: one feels compelled to act as such, justified by a generalized rule of conduct which is applicable to all others in a binding manner.

My proposed distinction between nonbinding and binding moral acts may assist us in delineating the different limits of cost-benefit calculation. It seems that moral acts such as altruism and saving are not binding because they are subject to cost-benefit calculation, while moral acts such as fairness are binding because they are almost immune from such calculation. To illustrate, the nonbinding act of charity is usually revised in light of the beneficiary's utility relative to the benefactor's disutility. Even pure altruists and saints have to undertake such a calculation in order to balance between one's own need and that of the beneficiary. Otherwise, one would not be a rational altruist but rather a sentimental fool. The sentimental fool would spend all his income on any passerby who happens to experience a relatively minor distress, or would jump off ship in the middle of the ocean to retrieve a doll for a crying child. In contrast, the binding act of honesty is not usually revised in light of circumstances. When one enters a contract that incurs liability, one is normally committed to pay the debt irrespective of unforeseeable gains or losses. When one borrows money from a friend, one feels obliged to pay the debt back irrespective of the fact that the friend's wealth has unexpectedly quadrupled in the interim.

In light of the above, neoclassical theory can ultimately account for nonbinding acts of morality. It can propose that the agent, after all, is not optimizing his own pleasure, but rather optimizing total pleasure: self-pleasure and the pleasure of potential beneficiaries. However, neoclassical theory cannot handle binding acts of morality, the ones that strictly meet Etzioni's four criteria. In such acts, the agent feels that he has to fulfill his side of the bargain, even in single-shot games, mainly to sustain his sense of self-integrity. This bargain can be with a legitimate ruler, where the agent feels obliged to pay his portion of the tax. The contract can be with a spouse, where the agent feels obliged to help in case the spouse is struck by illness. The binding promise can be implicit, as when the agent feels obliged not to cheat even when there is a negligible chance of getting caught. The arrangement can be with the community, where the agent feels guilty if he free rides. Or the pledge can be with one's self (e.g., not to accept money for sex, blood, or organs), where the agent feels remorse for violating such a pledge.

If agents place a price on binding commitments, as neoclassical theory proposes, why do we, in addition to the pecuniary penalties, ostracize people such as judges who are caught accepting bribes? If the dishonor expresses the disapproval of the judge's recklessness, we should expect greater dishonor to be heaped on a judge caught accepting a low bribe than on a judge caught accepting a high bribe, given the risk of apprehension to be the same. The latter judge is clearly less reckless than the former. But dishonor is usually leveled equally on both judges. And if the judge who accepted the low bribe is ridiculed, it is not because he is more dishonorable, but rather because he was so imprudent for failing to make a better use of his transgression. This is similar to the ridicule heaped upon a criminal who inadvertently leaves his identification card at the scene of the crime. If a judge does not sell his honor cheaply, or a criminal does not leave behind self-incriminating evidence, it would not make him more honorable, but only less reckless. So, the high price gained for selling trusted secrets or sexual services does not lessen the deserved dishonor. This is something that neoclassical theory cannot account for.

The Multiple-Self and Communitarianism: A Necessary Match?

Etzioni's critique of the unitary-self paradigm of neoclassical theory is most potent with regard to binding commitments, as in the instances just cited. In these instances, the agent seems to act according

to a self-integrity that is almost impervious to incentives. Granting that self-integrity is not reducible to pleasure utility, does Etzioni's multiple-self approach necessarily lead to Etzioni's communitarianism? This question is not about whether the two ideas, which are two main pillars of *The Moral Dimension*, are compatible, but rather is about whether the multiple-self view is also compatible with other paradigms, such as libertarianism and authoritarianism.

For Etzioni, communitarianism recognizes that communities cannot be reduced to the existence of their members. While individuals are free, they are so because they belong to communities that stimulate and fulfill their needs. It is neither that the community has a priority over the individual, as authoritarian thinkers argue, nor that the individual has a priority over the community, as libertarians maintain. Libertarians generally portray the community as an aggregation or a club, erected conveniently to meet the needs of the individual members. If one subscribes to such a view, according to Etzioni, "one leaves out the need for commitment to serve shared needs and for involvement in the community that attends to these needs."

While this statement is true with regard to nonbinding commitment, it is not necessarily valid with regard to binding commitment, i.e., the commitment that the agent undertakes as a member of a community. One basic commitment is the respect of private and communal property rights and the preservation of liberty in all its forms. These commitments may not be communal in Etzioni's sense, but they are at least moral. As such, these commitments, for most libertarians, are not subject to cost-benefit calculation. These rights do not have a price tag and, hence, are not subject to revision even when it is found that they are contrary to efficiency in the technical sense (i.e., the maximization of output without hurting anyone). This means that the libertarian position is compatible with the multiple-self view.

This point seems to escape Etzioni, perhaps because he fails to distinguish between libertarianism as an ethical/political paradigm and the neoclassical, unitary-self view exposed above. In fact, he lumps Friedrich von Hayek (the epitome of modern libertarianism) with Milton Friedman (the apotheosis of the neoclassical view). The difference between the two views can be stated tersely. At least some libertarians would, because of their primary concern with liberty, favor the market mechanism over planning even if planning were shown to be the more efficient of the two. In contrast, neoclassical

economists favor the market mechanism only insofar as it is more efficient than planning.

Stated differently, it is true that libertarians do not recognize the community's needs and goals as different from the combined interests of the members who make up the group. However, from a libertarian perspective, agents would still honor binding commitments towards the group, such as respect for the liberty of others. And they would do so out of the "moral utility" that Etzioni identifies. Such actions may further the interest of the community, but only as an unintended product. The "moral utility" would be primarily personal. Nonetheless, from the libertarian view, agents are ready to recognize that such commitment does not spring from pleasure utility; otherwise, they would be ready to sell their liberty to the highest bidder. For the libertarian, agents would abstain from free-riding not because of possible pecuniary penalty, but rather out of a regard for self-integrity. In fact, the libertarian view posits the individual as self-contained and prior to the community and, hence, the individual has no binding claim (i.e., right) that the community is responsible for his welfare. Thus, the libertarian disdains any scheme of public support, not because it invites inefficiency, but because it violates individualist principles. So, libertarianism is consistent with the multiple-self agenda.

Likewise, authoritarian and social conservative thinkers, who seek to impose moral rules on individuals to further the virtue of the community, would not find Etzioni's multiple-self view inconsistent with their agenda. The idea that agents abide by commitments not out of fear or cost-benefit calculation but out of deep regard to their self-integrity adds fuel to the social conservative agenda. With the multiple-self view, the social conservative agenda would not seem as authoritarian or coercive, but rather would appear to correspond with the internal motivation of agents.

Thus, while they are consistent, Etzioni's multiple-self view does not necessarily lead to the I&We paradigm. Conversely, Etzioni's emphasis on the importance of the community and on the social formation of tastes does not necessarily require a multiple-self view, as Gary Becker has shown in *Accounting for Tastes*. Becker posits that agents adopt the taste of their peer group in order to gain status, acceptance, or merely to stimulate conversation and social interaction in general. Thus, in this model, the importance of the social context in forming the preferences of individuals is fully explained using a unitary-self utility function.

Defining the “We”

However, it is far from accurate to intimate that Becker’s society resembles Etzioni’s vision of the “We.” As I understand this vision, the “We” is not merely a context that influences the formation of tastes. Nor is it simply a peer group that the individual uses instrumentally to satisfy his needs. The “We” involves a community with a particular identity that the agent adopts as an integral part of his own identity. For instance, a member of a tribe can be as proud of his community’s achievements as he is of his own. While Becker is correct that the agent uses his peer group as a means of entertainment or as a yardstick to measure his own success, the peer group by itself lacks the necessary element that would qualify it to be a “We” in Etzioni’s sense.

The critical element of the “We”—that which makes it more than a mere peer group—is the fusion of individual identity with communal identity. According to Etzioni, the sphere of the agent’s identity is not limited to his own immediate aspirations. It also includes the concerns and goals of the community with which he identifies. The critical element in the fusion of identities, which is at the core of Etzioni’s vision of the “We,” is not that agents have multiple utilities. As argued above, a libertarian could regard his moral principles as not for sale without subscribing to communitarian philosophy.

The pivotal factor behind the fusion of identities must rather be political. When an agent takes pride in his town or his own tribe, we have at hand the elementary block of political entity. While the “We” is not necessarily a full-fledged political entity, it shares with political entities a basic premise, the fusion of identities. There are further considerations and processes before an informal fusion of identities is transformed into a formal political organization. Nonetheless, Etzioni’s “We” must involve the basic political act of the agent identifying with the achievement of the group if it is to be distanced from a peer group. But there is no need for the “We” to solidify into a formal organization, where the agents formally express allegiance to it, in order for the “We” to subsist. Etzioni’s “We,” as I see it, is neither as flimsy as a peer group, nor as muscular as a political group. On the other hand, to account for it, one should not start with what it shares with peer groups, but rather with what it shares with political groups. As such, the “We” points towards the articulation of a basic block of political theory, highlighting how the fabric of informal fusions of identities is the prerequisite to any legitimate political entity.

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