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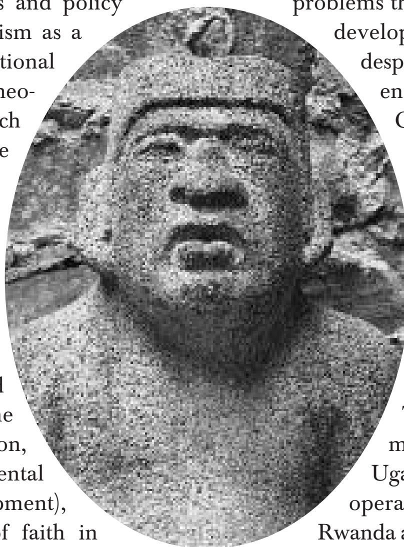
The Limits of Regionalism

Recent developments in the Horn of Africa highlight the difficulties facing regional cooperation in the present international climate, writes **Abdelwahab El-Affendi**

It remains to be seen how big a hole the recent Indian nuclear tests have blown in the theories and doctrines which see in regionalism the ideal approach to tackling international security concerns. After all, the most recent Gulf war (1990-1), which blew at least one sub-regional organisation (the Arab Union Council) off the map, and made some others (the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Conference, and the Gulf Co-operation Council) highly irrelevant, appears to have created scarcely a dent in the universal enthusiasm for regionalism. A growing body of analysts and policy makers still sees regionalism as a panacea for most international ills. It offers them both a theoretical framework with which to make sense of the unstructured chaos of the new era, and a practical approach for creating order out of the ruins of the old bi-polar system.



The experience of the Horn of Africa region illustrates both the promise and limits of regionalism. The main regional organisation, IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority for Development), sprung up as a result of faith in regional co-operation which predates the current enthusiasm for regionalism. It came into existence in 1985 in response to ecological concerns above all, as well as to strong pressure from the international community. The region, which had come to symbolise all that could, and did, go wrong with Africa and the Third World, had been a major arena of cold war rivalry. However, in the post-cold war era, the United States has taken a keen interest in it. The Greater Horn Initiative, launched in 1994, and President Clinton's historic visit to Africa in March 1998, both emphasised regionalism as a cornerstone of the quest to promote development and security in Africa. This was symbolised by the Entebbe Declaration, signed on that visit by President Clinton and the leaders of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

With this approach the US is committing itself to backing a new pattern of regional alliances: activist, aiming to restructure the continent with US support, and keen to tackle the problems that have held back Africa's development. Corruption and despotic leadership are the main enemies. If successful, the Greater Horn Initiative will, in fact, carve out a completely new region. This will be based principally on IGAD (whose members are Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, and Uganda). In addition, the new grouping includes Tanzania, in the 1970s a member (with Kenya and Uganda) of the East Africa Co-operation Organisation, and Rwanda and Burundi, previously not part of any regional body.

However, the tensions besetting this new region illustrate the limits facing regional co-operation in the current climate.

Most of its member-countries are led by former (Marxist) guerrilla leaders, whose regimes have reached power through prolonged insurgencies (spanning over thirty years in the case of Eritrea). Most do not espouse multi-party democracy, but emphasise some commitment to democratisation and a market economy, and a respect for human rights. US backing is based

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Centre for the Study of Democracy
University of Westminster, 100 Park Village East, London NW1 3SR
Tel: +44 0171 911 5138
Fax: +44 0171 911 5164
e-mail: csd@wmin.ac.uk
http://www.wmin.ac.uk/csd/

Director: Professor John Keane

on the hope that the leaders, who are seen as sensible, honest, and democratic at heart (if not always in practice), can be coaxed into acting more responsibly. One major US aim is to contain the Islamic radicalism emanating from Sudan, and assistance to Greater Horn Initiative countries includes military aid designed specifically to help their anti-Sudan campaigns.

The drawback of this policy is that it smacks of Cold War-style containment, which means that the human rights records of the allies are often overlooked. This stores up problems for later. Eritrea is already suffering from an insurgency; Uganda has had three simultaneous small civil wars; and Ethiopia remains tense, as do Rwanda and Burundi. But the final straw has been the eruption of a new civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1998, which has sucked in most of the neighbouring countries, and the current conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which broke out in May 1998 and threatens to become a full-scale war.

The activism of the former guerrilla leaders has created a tendency to settle regional disputes by force. Eritrea, soon after sponsoring belligerent action against Sudan in 1997 (with Ethiopia and Uganda), took military action against Yemen over disputed islands in the Red Sea (finally settled by arbitration in favour of Yemen in November 1998), and is now on a war path in a border dispute with Ethiopia. The latter has also launched raids on Somalia in 1996 and 1997 and, in 1997, supported military action against Sudan. Uganda was heavily involved in the same action against Sudan, and has also joined two successive wars in Rwanda and Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) in 1997 and 1998. Following a rebellion in the Democratic Congo in early 1988, the government there claimed the insurgency had been fomented by Uganda and Rwanda. Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia gave the government military support; South Africa, after some wavering, also backed the government, though by diplomatic, not military, means.

> The drawback of this policy is that it smacks of Cold War-style containment, which means that the human rights records of the allies are often overlooked

This looks like a recipe for endemic instability, not for a new peace in a new era. Temporarily at least, the pursuit of stability appears to require plenty of destabilisation.

To complicate matters further, Egypt joined the fray in late 1997. Egypt has always regarded Sudan as its strategic backyard, and is keen to safeguard its vital water supply, the Nile. Tension between the two countries after 1991 coincided with a rapproachment between Sudan and its other neighbours, Eritrea and Ethiopia. (Sudan had given massive support to the rebels whose insurgencies toppled the Marxist regime in Addis Ababa in 1991 and led to the secession from Ethiopia of Eritrea; the grateful new regimes then drove Southern Sudanese rebels from Ethiopia and cut off all support for them.) But, in 1995, Ethiopia accused Sudan of harbouring suspects in the attempted assassination of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt in Addis Ababa, and Egypt and Ethiopia later jointly led a successful campaign to impose UN sanctions on Sudan. But Egypt then refused to tighten sanctions, fearing that the weakening of the Sudanese government could lead to the secession of Southern Sudan, which it opposes; this created a rift with Ethiopia. Subsequently, Egypt and Sudan moved towards co-operation to promote of common regional interests.

Effective regional and sub-regional co-operation presupposes the isolation of sub-regional dynamics in order to focus on particular problems and so enhance co-operation. But, in the Horn of Africa, this isolation appears to be more difficult than at first envisaged. Already one of the most volatile regions in the world, the Horn is linked to three even more unstable areas: the Great Lakes, the Middle East, and the Gulf. US involvement may have discouraged a shift towards peaceful conflict resolution in favour of belligerency.

> The US is committing itself to backing a new pattern of regional alliances: activist, aiming to restructure the continent, and keen to tackle the problems that have held back Africa's development

During all this turmoil, none of the regional and sub-regional mechanisms has been used to resolve disputes. Attempts to end internal and regional conflicts have become bogged down in rivalries and hostilities.

The IGAD experiment in regional co-operation has shown the limits of regionalism in the present international atmosphere. Not only have regional institutions been bypassed by states pursuing their aims with military means, but the US, using a logic similar to that of the Cold War, has tolerated un-, even anti-democratic, tendencies and policies. Even when genuinely sought, regional co-operation encounters many difficulties. In circumstances such as those in the Horn of Africa, the obstacles are even greater.

Abdelwahab El-Affendi is a Senior Research Fellow at CSD. This is an edited version of a paper he presented to the CSD Research Seminar in June 1998.

Reinventing government

Making government leaner and cheaper is on the agenda. **Bert A. Rockman** *explains why and argues that this new approach does not solve the central difficulties of government*

In a number of countries - mostly of Anglo derivation - governments are reinventing the functions, organisations, and processes of governance. In the USA this process is simply referred to as 'reinvention', after the emphasis given in the 1993 National Performance Review (NPR) - chaired by Vice-President Al Gore - to the need to 'reinvent government'.

CHANGING BUREAUCRATIC CULTURE

The aim of reinvention is to create a new culture of government. The root problem, according to reinvention enthusiasts, is that, in the information age, bureaucracies from the industrial age are performing government functions. Government is therefore inefficient - consumed by process and regulation - and, thus, user-unfriendly. Government imposes severe limits on managerial flexibility and organisational adaptiveness. It also costs too much. The NPR claimed red tape and regulation was stifling every ounce of creativity in federal government and so preventing it from performing effectively - which, in turn, had undermined confidence in it.

The NPR emphasized the need for flexible, adaptive, and consumer-oriented agencies that *learn to do more with less* (emphasis added), and for a reduction in the vast army of overhead officials responsible for auditing and generally controlling others. The reinvention paradigm stresses the empowerment of officials and the need to evaluate the performance of agencies and managers by results.

The new culture of governance extols private sector practices as appropriate models for government. A British civil servant involved in 'new public management' has offered an outlook that, with minor variations, could travel from one 'reinvented' country to another:

'What will the civil service of the future look like? . . . Numbers will fall to new lows. . . . There will be a minimum framework of prescribed rules. . . . Operational management will be delegated to departments and agencies. Departments will be restructured with . . . smaller staffs concentrating on policy making, strategic management, and target setting, and monitoring contracts for service provision supplied by a mix of public and private sector providers.'

In *The End of Whitehall: Death of a Paradigm?* (1995), Colin Campbell and Graham Wilson note that a growing distrust of government creates discontent with the prevailing culture of governance. It is certainly true that the assertiveness of publics, and the broad diffusion of higher education in modern democracies, make people less deferential to established institutions, including government bureaucracies, and more receptive to reforming them. But it is even more the case that political leaders, in an era of intense financial pressure, are trying to find ways to cut public sector costs - or to look as if they are doing so. Leaders such as Margaret Thatcher have wanted to remake the culture of government to create an ethos of efficiency, risk-taking, and entrepreneurship. The new culture of governance, in this view, requires lean government.

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DIMENSIONS OF REINVENTION

Personnel. Outsiders will be introduced to loosen the restrictions of the civil service guild system. This includes putting managers, or some subset of them, on limited term contracts, renewal of which depends on the outcome of performance reviews.

Results or Performance Orientation. By loosening rules and restrictions, and emphasising performance rather than procedural accountability, entrepreneurial management will be encouraged.

Bottom-Up Management. By allowing those closest to the action to make judgements - and making them responsible for these judgements - goals will be formulated from below, and micro-management from the top eliminated.

Customer Satisfaction. The demands and desires of service users will be catered to by, for example, putting connected services together in the same complex ('one stop shopping').

Borrowing Private Sector Techniques. Government is to be run in a more businesslike manner. This idea treats administration as though it could be freed from the restraints of political accountability and responsibility.

*Competition and Markets***.** Reinvention enthusiasts see competition - between agencies or between public sector agencies and private suppliers - as a way of 'keeping everyone on their toes' and thus - presumably - making a better product. A further presumption is that any government service can be provided by a non-governmental supplier.

*Contracting-Out and Privatisation***.** The presumption that there are no sacred governmental functions leads to the notion that it may be better - and cheaper, too - for private suppliers to perform traditional government functions. Privatisation and contracting-out also entail removing direct expenditures and personnel counts from the public sector, and even gaining revenues for this sector if public assets are sold.

*Saving Money***.** This may be the primary driving force behind reinvention. It is not surprising that the NPR's 1993 report is entitled *Creating a Government That Works Better and Costs Less.*

Streamlining (i.e. Cutting Programs). Cutting down what government does (called 'Back to Basics' in the NPR report.)

WHY HAS REINVENTION SPREAD?

Reinvention, according to the NPR, has spread from 'Australia to Great Britain, from Singapore to Sweden, from the Netherlands to New Zealand'. What are the key reasons for this spread?

- A discontent with government as we have known it.
- Politicians looking for a gimmick to say they are making government run better - and saving money.
- A set of ideas favourable to neo-liberal responses (markets, privatisation, etc.).
- Limited resources available for present projects and little room for new initiatives.
- This leads politicians to implore others to show creativity in the absence of resources or guidance from the top.

CONSEQUENCES OF REINVENTION

The assumptions behind reinvention may conflict with those frequently seen as basic to constitutional government, such as fairness, equity, accountability, and responsibility.

Other problem areas abound. The rule of law is fundamentally about process, equity, and fairness; about equal treatment before the law, not about buying power. The defining characteristic of a professionalised civil service is its integrity and probity, not its management skills. On the other hand, the fundamental problem of government - and hence bureaucracy - is its lack of goal clarity. But this rarely has a bureaucratic source. Most often, it is the consequence of politicians' inability to forge a political consensus.

The management of government can be improved. But this can only happen with the co-operation of politicians, and it is unlikely to reduce the cost of governance. More important, it is unlikely to touch the central difficulties of government.

The beatification of private sector practices is misplaced. It can be argued that

the problem with democratic governments is that they are excessively user friendly because they have many incentives to oversupply goods. They can also hide the true costs of supply. Private suppliers are more efficient. Yet they are not in business to please their customers but to make profits, if necessary by depressing the level of service they offer. To be efficient does not mean being customer friendly; it may mean the reverse. Efficiency should not be confused with customer-friendliness.

Citizenship is not the equivalent of being a customer. Citizenship implies a relationship of reciprocity between citizen and government and, therefore, of obligation to the larger community: for example, by paying taxes. It is not clear what reinvention has to say about this. With an unbounded command to agencies to go out and please 'customers', the chances are that the customers will be the most proximate organised clients of an agency's programmes. The language of customer satisfaction confuses fundamentally the undertakings of private suppliers of private goods with those of public suppliers of public goods.

All of this begs the question: what, if anything, is the unique responsibility of government? What is the difference between a system disciplined by law and one disciplined by the hidden hand?

The management of government can be improved. But this can only happen with the co-operation of politicians, and it is unlikely to reduce the cost of governance. More important, it is unlikely to touch the central difficulties of government. These are not related to public management but to a lack of resources, to a lack of agreement about policy, and to dislocating pressures in labour markets that arise from globalisation, new technologies, and the fungible nature of international capital. Reinvention is a peripheral response to these problems. Yet it also makes more problematic relationships between citizens and their governments by displacing the procedurally proper and equitable adminstrative practices of government with the potentially more arbitrary ones of adaptive, consumer-oriented agencies.

Bert Rockman is University Professor of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh. This is an edited version of a paper he presented to the CSD Research Seminar in February 1998.

Imagining Globalisation

Doreen Massey *criticizes today's dominant story of globalisation*

'Globalisation' often evokes a powerful vision of an immense, unstructured, unbounded space, of unfettered mobility, and of a glorious, complex, mixity. But this vision should make one uneasy, and for four reasons.

First, it exhibits a curious acceptance of the material 'factness' of the stories (some) economists tell. This acceptance-as-background of a particular - that is, neo-liberal - version of economic globalisation produces other effects. Precisely because of its lack both of specification and of an analysis of causes - except for an unthinking technological determinism - this story of globalisation has almost the inevitability of a grand narrative. And with that comes an imagining of spatial differences as temporal. Mali and Chad are not 'yet' drawn into the global community of instantaneous communication? Don't worry; they soon will be. This is an *aspatial* view of globalisation. Space has been marshalled under the sign of time, and countries like these are left with no space to tell different stories, to follow another path. What has been forgotten in this iconic economics, with its implicit inevitabilities, is that economic globalisation can take a variety of different forms and, more fundamentally, that 'economics' is a discourse too. The material and the discursive interlock: how we imagine globalisation will affect the form it takes.

> The major world national economies are no more open in terms of trade or capital flows than they were in the period of the Gold Standard

Secondly, imagining globalisation in terms of unbounded free space chimes all too well with neo-liberalism's powerful 'free-trade' rhetoric. This imagining is a pivotal element in a powerful, political discourse that is produced mainly in the North; a discourse which has institutions - the IMF, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation, and so on; a discourse which is normative; and a discourse which has effects. This discourse enables structural adjustment programmes to be imposed in the South, with increasing hardship for the already poor, and especially for women, a result; and it legitimises economies of the South being forced to prioritise exports over production for local consumption. This discourse is an important part of the continuing legitimisation of the view that there is one particular model of 'development', one path to 'modernity'.

In the 'North' this discourse becomes the basis for decisions to implement the form of globalisation it describes: the signing of the Uruguay round of GATT pushed it a step further; the World Trade Organisation is committed to producing it. This is a striking demonstration of the utter intermingling of 'representation' and 'action' in the production of a particular spatiality Globalisation is presented as an *inevitability*; yet some of the most powerful agencies in the world are intent on its *production*. This vision of neo-liberal globalisation, then, is not so much a description of how the world is, as an image of how the world is being made. And, once having been installed as hegemonic, it provides, above all, an excuse for inaction. Tony Blair throws up his hands at suggestions of more progressive policies on tax and social wlefare.

Thirdly, this notion of globalisation is, in any case, inaccurate. The world is not yet totally 'globalised'; the fact that some are striving very hard to make it so is evidence of the project's incompleteness. But it is not just a case of incompleteness, as also of inequality. Consider some alternative iconic economics. According to Paul Hirst and Graham Thompson, the major world national economies are no more open in terms of trade or capital flows than they were in the period of the Gold Standard; and the degrees of openness have fluctuated over time with the nature of economic development. Moreover - Hirst and Thompson again - there is a spectacular geographical concentration in contemporary globalisation: 91.5 per cent of foreign direct investment, and 80 per cent of trade, take place in parts of the world where 28 per cent of the world's population lives; the world's people are incorporated into globalisation as-it-is-usually-described in a strikingly unequal way. Finally - the third alternative iconinc fact - this inequality is *produced.* There is a world market for capital: financial transactions, investment, and traded goods; yet there is none for labour: people roaming the world in search of work are 'economic migrants', controlled and constrained by barriers.

All this raises the fourth source of concern. Right-wing proponents of free trade argue their case in terms which suggest there is some self-evident right to global mobility. Yet, in the debate on immigration, they immediately use a quite different geographical imagination, one that contradicts the vision of globalisation: an imagination of defensible places, of the rights of 'local people' to their own 'local places', of a world divided by difference and the smack of firm boundaries, a geographical imagination of nationalisms. The claim to free mobility by the world's poor is rejected out of hand. The new world order of capital's globalisation is predicated on holding labour in place. This double imaginary - the freedom of space, and the right to 'one's own place' - works in favour of the already-powerful.

Today's hegemonic story of globalisation, then, provides a legitimation of things. It is not just a description, but a discourse, an imaginative geography which justifies the actions of those who promulgate it. And that 'other' discourse of closed borders is not some ancient hangover. Nor are the two discourses, in fact, simply contradictory. Both are part and parcel of constructing the particular form of economic globalisation which we face at the moment.

Doreen Massey is Professor of Geography at the Open University. She gave a paper to the CSD Research Seminar in March 1998 on the 'Politics of Spaciality', A full version of this article , ' Inagining Globalisation: power-geometries of time-space, will appear in A. Brah et al (eds) Global Futures: migrations, environment, and globalization *(Macmillan, 1999).*

Globalisation and Democracy

Tony McGrew *considers different analyses of globalisation and the implications of the process for the democratic project.*

Globalisation - simply, the widening, deepening, and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness - is transforming the societies, cultures, and economies of the advanced, capitalist world, and beyond. Consider the following:

- Every day, over $1.2 trillion flow through the world's foreign exchange markets: a sum fifty times the size of world trade, and which dwarfs the collective foreign exchange reserves of the world's richest states.
- Multinational corporations now account for between 25 and 33 percent of world output, 70 per cent of world trade, and 80 per cent of international investment.
- Since 1950, world trade has more than doubled. The global trading system, which incorporates 95 per cent of the world's nations, is becoming increasingly critical to national economic prosperity.
- Global warming, ozone depletion, and deforestation are environmental problems which bind states into a single global community.
- In 1960, there were 70 million international tourists; by 1995 there were almost 500 million.
- At the turn of the century, there were 176 citizens', or non-governmental, organisations operating internationally; in 1993, according to the United Nations, 28,900.

OUT OF CONTROL?

The political and academic debate about globalisation is intense. Three schools of thought have crystallised. *Hyper-globalists*, such as Kenichi Ohmae, regard globalisation as defining a new epoch in which '. . . traditional nation-states have become . . . impossible business units in a global economy'. This view celebrates the emergence of a single global market and the principle of global competition as the harbingers of human progress. The authority and legitimacy of the nation-state is undermined as national territory becomes increasingly the site of global and transnational flows, and as institutions and mechanisms of global and regional governance become more significant.

The sceptics - Robert Gilpin, for example - discount the idea that internationalisation prefigures the emergence of a new, less state-centric world order. They point to national governments' growing centrality in the regulation and active promotion of internationalisation. International economic conditions may constrain, but they do not immobilise, governments. Sceptics suggest that 'globalisation' has become a politically convenient excuse for implementing orthodox neo-liberal economic strategies. Gilpin equates globalisation with Americanisation and the emergence of a state-promoted multilateral economic order, one characterised by inequality and hierarchy. Sceptics also point to the comparatively greater levels of economic interdependence and the more extensive geographical reach of the world economy at the beginning of the century.

> Globalisation is associated with the emergence of powerful, new, non-territorial forms of economic and political organisation in the global domain - multinational corporations, transnational social movements, and international regulatory agencies

Transformationalists - Anthony Giddens, amongst others - reject both the hyperglobalist rhetoric of the end of the sovereign state and the sceptics' claim that nothing much has changed. Instead, they argue, globalisation is reconstituting, or 're-engineering', the power, functions, and authority of national governments. States retain the ultimate legal claim to 'effective supremacy over what occurs within their own territories', but, at the same time, the jurisdiction of institutions of international governance is expanding, and the constraints set by, as well as the obligations derived from, international law are growing. In the European Union, for example, sovereign power is divided between national, international, and local authorities. Even where sovereignty appears intact states no longer retain sole command of what takes place inside their territorial boundaries. The power of national governments is not necessarily being diminished by globalisation, but is being reconstituted ' around the consolidation of domestic and international linkages'.

Globalisation is associated with the emergence of powerful, new, non-territorial forms of economic and political organisation in the global domain - for example, multinational corporations, transnational social movements, and international regulatory agencies - but the global system does not constitute a 'world society'. Rather, as T. G. Weiss argues, 'we can expect to see more and more of a different kind of state taking shape in the world arena,one that is reconstituting its power at the centre of alliances formed either within or outside the nation-state'. This is evident in the emerging shift from government to governance: that is, the replacement of state intervention by new forms of state activism in which governments share the tasks of governance with a complex array of institutions, both public and private, international and transnational.

DEMOCRACY BEYOND BORDERS

Many commentators have argued that existing mechanisms of global governance are both ineffectual in relation to the tasks they have acquired, especially in managing the consequences of globalisation, and are unaccountable sites of power. Reflecting upon this democratic deficit Robert Keohane concludes that, to be 'effective in the twenty-first century, modern democracy requires international institutions. In addition, to be consistent with democratic values, these institutions must be accountable to domestic civil society. Combining global governance with effective democratic accountability will be a major challenge for scholars and policy

makers alike in the years ahead'.

There are three leading schools of thought in the emerging normative debate about democracy beyond borders.

Rooted in what E. H. Carr referred to as the 'harmony of interests' - as opposed to the clash of competing individual interests of the neo-liberal outlook - *liberal-reformism* considers that political necessity will bring about a more co-operative world order. Avoiding global ecological crisis and managing the pervasive social, economic, and political dislocation arising from contemporary processes of economic globalisation 'will require the articulation of a collaborative ethos based upon the principles of consultation, transparency, and accountability. . . . There is no alternative to working together and using collective power to create a better world'. Liberal-reformism's contemporary advocates, such as the Commission on Global Governance, aim to construct a more democratic world in which states are accountable to peoples. The commission's 1995 report, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, proposes a multi-faceted strategy of international institutional reform - above all, a reformed UN buttressed by regional forms of governance such as the EU - and the nurturing of a new global civic ethic.

While liberal-reformism emphasises the necessary adaptation of core organisations in the existing world order, advocates of the *radical* project stress the creation of alternative mechanisms of governance based on civic republican principles: that is, inclusive, deliberative, self-governing communities in which the public good is to the fore. For many radical republicans the agents of change are to be found in existing (critical) social movements, such as the environmental, women's, and peace movements, which challenge both the authority of states and international agencies as well as orthodox definitions of the 'political'. The radical republican model is a 'bottom up' vision of civilising world order. It represents a normative theory of 'humane governance', grounded in the existence of a multiplicity of 'communities of fate' and social movements, as opposed to the individualism and appeals to rational self-interest of neo-liberalism and liberal-reformism.

Finally, the *cosmopolitan* project tries to specify the principles and institutional arrangements needed to ensure the accountability of forms of power currently operating beyond the scope of democratic control. In the next millennium we will all have to become 'cosmopolitan citizens', mediating between national traditions, communities of fate, and alternative forms of life. Political agents who can 'reason from the point-of-view of others' will be better equipped to resolve - fairly - the new, challenging transboundary issues and processes that create overlapping communities of fate. And for the cosmopolitan project a democratic political community will be a world in which citizens enjoy multiple citizenships: of their own communities, but also of wider regions, and of the wider global order.

> The radical republican model is a 'bottom-up' vision of civilising world order. It represents a normative theory of 'humane governance', grounded in the existence of a multiplicity of 'communities of fate' and social movements

The cosmopolitan position maintains that the reform of world order needs to be rethought as a 'double-sided process': the deepening of democracy within a national community, involving the democratisation of states and civil societies over time, and the extension of democratic forms and processes across territorial borders. Legitimate political activity must be reconceived in a way which disconnects it from its traditional anchor in fixed borders and delimited territories. Instead, political activity should be seen as an attribute of basic democratic arrangements or basic democratic law which can, in principle, be entrenched, and then drawn upon, in diverse self-regulating associations - from cities and sub-national regions, to nation-states, regions, and wider global networks.

THE TEST

Contemporary globalisation is inescapably altering the contours of political, economic, social, and cultural life in advanced capitalist societies. It thrusts on the political agenda fundamental questions about the kind of societies we wish to live in and how we adjust to its imperatives. The test of political civilisation today is whether we can harness the opportunities presented by globalisation to effective social ends: how we can civilise and democratise globalisation.

Dr Tony McGrew is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at the Open University. His Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture *(with David Held) will be published in March 1999. This is an edited version of a paper he gave to the CSD Research Seminar in May 1998.*

Feminist theory and citizenship

Kimberly Hutchings *analyses three approaches to citizenship*

Since the 1980s there has been a revival of interest within feminist theory in the concept of citizenship. Three main strands are discernible in this body of work: one, critical of liberal and republican notions of citizenship, tries to build a feminist account of citizenship on the foundations of sexual difference; the second, in reaction to the first, goes back to both liberal and republican inspiration and to a feminist idea of citizenship as transcending sexual difference; the third strand emphasises the centrality of pluralism to any adequate feminist conception of citizenship. Jean Bethke Elshtain, Sarah Ruddick, and Carol Pateman represent the first strand; Mary Dietz and Anne Phillips the second; and Iris Marion Young and Chantal Mouffe the third.

The work of Elshtain, Ruddick, and Pateman is loosely linked to a radical feminist critique of citizenship. They argue that aspects of women's embodied existence are currently excluded from or denied by the public sphere in such a way as to make women second class citizens in both state and civil society. They also suggest that these aspects of women's existence, which are currently confined to the private sphere, would enrich both politics and the notion of citizenship if the current distinction between the private and the public (personal and political) were either abolished or reconstituted. Elshtain and Ruddick focus above all on aspects of the distinctively republican conception of citizenship: first, the public/private split, which they trace back to Aristotle but see as persisting throughout the history of Western culture, economy and politics; and, secondly, nationality and identification with the collective good or purpose in the form of the nation-state, and the concomitant assumption that fighting for one's country is the ultimate expression of good citizenship.

Pateman, by contrast, focuses on the liberal conception of citizenship, arguing that the public/private split is reconstituted in a new form of patriarchy in the modern period, and that this renders liberal citizenship inherently antithetical and unsuited to women's lives and needs.

> Rousseau makes clear that the kind of participation he envisages leaves too little time for domestic and productive work and that a non-political class - for example, that of slaves and women in ancient times - has been the traditional way to deal with this

LINKLATER AND KANT

All three theorists are uneasy with the notion that citizenship is a way in which the natural right inherent in all human beings has been recognised and upheld. This view has been propounded by Andrew Linklater who - working in the Kantian/liberal tradition - regards 'humanity' as the touchstone for citizenship. Using different arguments, all three regard Linklater's 'humanity' as that of the abstract, sovereign individual. What for Linklater defines the individual as 'human' is a set of universally present qualities which make no distinction between men and women.

For Elshtain, Ruddick and Pateman this model is not genuinely universal, but reflects predominantly masculine values. It also fails to reflect either the moral or the political positioning of women in a state structured by the public/private divide, or, more generally, an international order and global political economy also structured by that divide. All three point to the need to investigate the link between the Kantian/liberal models of citizenship and the peculiar positioning of women as citizens in the liberal state. Pateman has famously suggested that the problem is not, as traditional liberal feminism believed, how to enable women to become sovereign individuals, but, rather, how to recognise the fact that women cannot be sovereign individuals in the style suggested by Hobbesian and Kantian social contract arguments because of the nature of the conditions of possibility in question.

MILLER AND ROUSSEAU

How does the strand of feminist work on citizenship represented by Elshtain, Ruddick and Pateman regard the democratic republican conception of citizenship propounded by David Miller? Here, again, the public/private divide is crucial. Rousseau, on whom Miller draws, is notorious for his confinement of women to the private sphere and his restriction of collective self-determination to men. Miller does not share these views; nevertheless, Elshtain and Rudddick argue, it is unwise to draw unquestioningly on Rousseau without exploring how women come to be excluded and how this bears on his ideal of what a citizen is.

A two-fold critique can be distinguished here: first, Miller draws attention, as of course does Rousseau, to just how demanding the role of the republican citizen is. Rousseau makes clear that the kind of participation he envisages leaves too little time for domestic and productive work and that a non-political class - for example, that of slaves and women in ancient times - has been the traditional way to deal with this problem. This relates, of course, to the contemporary argument about the ways in which the disproportionate burden of domestic labour carried by women makes it more difficult for them to participate politically. Miller is not advocating the kind of public/private split on which Rousseau relies, but he does not explain how his own republican conception of citizenship is possible in practice, nor does he acknowledge that the public/private split in operation still puts barriers in the way of women's active citizenship that do not exist in the same way for men.

Secondly, and more important, Miller relies on the modern concept of nationality as the basis for his self-determining political community. However, as both Elshtain and Ruddick point out, women have understood and experienced their relation to the nation, or to whatever form the political collective takes, differently than have men. What both thinkers imply is that women are likely to feel their loyalties as, if not more, strongly, at the local (family) and the international (as women)

levels than at the level of the state. Moreover, they argue, Miller's sanitised version of nationality and his assumption that a condition of benign mutual neglect between self-determining nation-states is the ideal in international relations ignores the fact that, in practice, the exclusionary nature of nation-states necessarily produces a 'default' position of political violence.

Whatever one's views of Elshtain's and Ruddick's positions, they raise the question of the relation between women and state or nation in a way which complicates Miller's reliance on a straightforwardly common political identity and culture. This question is strengthened by work on women and nationality which examines the ambivalence of women's relation to the nation and the ways in which nation-state politics can make women peculiarly vulnerable. As many feminist scholars have pointed out, the costs and benefits of nationality and national identity are gendered.

The patterns of Elshtain's, Ruddick's and Pateman's arguments are similar. All three point to the ways in which what is presented as universal (humanity) or unitary (national identity) is actually gendered, and to the ways in which the apparently universal and unitary sphere of citizenship is actually supported by sexual difference, primarily through the work of women in the private sphere. All three, as the next step, also argue for morality and politics to be re-thought on the basis of a positive evaluation of the values and practices associated with the private sphere. These arguments have been heavily, and variously, criticised.

TRANSCENDING SEXUAL DIFFERENCE

Elshtain's, Ruddick's, and Pateman's critics focus on their fixed notion of sexual difference. The issue here is not whether or not these thinkers are biological essentialists, but whether or not their analysis of the centrality of the public/private divide to discussions of citizenship confirms rather than challenges women's exclusion from the political.

Both Dietz and Phillips endorse the feminist critique of the way women have been situated in relation to citizenship within the modern state, and share aspects of the critique of purely rights-based and traditional republican thinking. However, they also argue that some notion of identification with others, which is not partial in the way characteristic of personal relations in the private sphere, is necessary for politics. The idea of citizenship, they both argue, is one which enables people to work for and on behalf of one another without even having met. It transcends, or ought to, differences (sexual and others). By accepting the centrality of sexual difference and the public/private distinction, Elshtain *et al* are in danger both of perpetuating the disadvantage which female citizens suffer and of corrupting public with private morality. Dietz argues for an Aristotelian understanding of the political as the sphere which regulates all others, including the private, and thus for the importance of women's participation in the public sphere, the state as well as civil society. Her ideal of politics draws on Arendt and the republican notion that the practice of politics is the highest form of human action, and strongly echoes Miller's account of the responsibility involved in citizenship.

> The exclusionary nature of nation-states necessarily produces a 'default' position of political violence.

Phillips's thinking is more social democratic: she argues for direct participation of women in the liberal polity as the best way to gain and maintain substantive equality. Drawing on both liberal and republican ideals, she argues for the importance of liberal rights and participation, and advocates affirmative action to address the underrepresentation of women in decision making bodies. The goal of this affirmative action is a politics of presence in which the direct representation of women's interests is ensured as part of a more general project of deliberative democracy.

Neither Dietz nor Phillips argues for a straightforward return to liberal or republican models of citizenship. However, both accept that the interests of women are better served by an inclusive conception of politics rather than by one which institutionalises duality and sexual difference. In this sense they oppose both traditional liberal and republican norms which depended on the exclusion of women, and those feminist arguments which seek to turn the tables on the public/private divide. In general, Dietz is closer to Miller's conception of citizenship, partly because of her Aristotelian inspiration; whereas Phillips's social democracy shares aspects of liberalism as well as republicanism, and is grounded on a fundamental commitment to equality of right which bears a family resemblance to Linklater's position. Common to both Dietz and Phillips is a feminist ideal of citizenship which resists a feminist identity politics; that is, a politics in which one's position as a woman determines the nature either of one's political participation or of one's moral point of view.

RADICALLY PLURALIST FEMINISMS

The more radically pluralist feminisms of Young and Mouffe place strong emphasis on the current significance of differences between women which cut across sexual difference and on the ineradicable nature

of difference as such. Although their positions are by no means the same, both Young and Mouffe reflect the experience of feminist politics in the 1980s and 1990s, in which the implausibility of claiming a common identity for women as either ground or end of political action has become increasingly evident.

In Young's case, her perception of the centrality of difference along lines of gender, race, and class leads her to promote differential citizenship as a constitutionally entrenched long term phenomenon, rather than a temporary expedient, as in Phillips's account. Young claims that the problem of justice must be understood not only as one of material distribution but also as one of access to power. Currently certain groups are systematically disadvantaged in terms of their access to power; the answer to this is to institutionalise that access through special mechanisms of representation and democratic control for those disadvantaged groups. Thus, rather than being a generic identity, there will be a variety of forms of citizenship related to the various identity groups.

The interests of women are better served by an inclusive conception of politics rather than by one which institutionalises duality and sexual difference

Young's ideas bear a family resemblance to Phillips's notion of a politics of presence, but with a greater emphasis on the positive value and permanence of differential identities. Habermasian communicative ethics provide the inspiration for Young's discussion but, according to Young, hers is an ethics of communication minus Habermas's orientation towards consensus. Thus, Young's work aspires not towards the abolition of difference as such, but to the abolition of its systematically unequal significance in the liberal state. The stress Young puts on the enduring importance of differential identities, however, distances her further than Dietz and Phillips from the citizenship ideals of Linklater and Miller. Young does not either assume or aspire to an ideal of common humanity or presume the need to ground politics in moral universals. At the same time, her analysis of the political salience of identities cuts against the strong notion of common national identity in which Miller grounds both political and moral obligations.

Although Mouffe's stress on the ineradicability of difference is if anything stronger than Young's, she does not advocate an identity politics in Young's sense. Unlike Young, Mouffe does not regard identities of any kind as fixed but sees all invocations of human, sexual, racial, class, and national identity as instances of the logic of human existence in which to be is always to be defined in exclusive opposition to something else.

The reasons for this go back to Mouffe's understanding of politics as a fundamentally partisan activity, which in turn reflects the logic of the discursive processes through which subjective identity is formed. This is not a logic which can ever be overcome in either a political or moral common ground or end. For Mouffe, citizenship in contemporary liberal democracy is explained in terms of an irresolvable tension between identity and difference, in which politics is irredeemably conflictual and pluralist in principle but operates with certain systematic exclusions in practice. The achievement of liberalism, for Mouffe, is not its respect for equal rights as such, but its capacity, through the rule of law, to institutionalise opposition without violence. Mouffe sees herself as drawing on both republican and liberal conceptions of citizenship: republican, in that she emphasises citizenship as a practice of participation in the public sphere which constantly calls prevailing practices of exclusion into question; liberal, in that Mouffe relies on the institutionalisation of rights to protect the political participation of citizens from degenerating into violence. Mouffe's goal is not the abolition of difference - that is a normative illusion with dangerous authoritarian implications - but to make possible the political challenging of exclusionary differences, including sexual difference, which have become entrenched within the liberal political order.

Young's is an ethics of communication minus Habermas's orientation towards consensus

In spite of her claim to be drawing on both liberal and republican inspiration, Mouffe's position poses problems for both the traditional options offered by Linklater and Miller as well as for the alternative feminist arguments that have been considered. Thinkers such as Elshtain, Ruddick, and Pateman might see Dietz and Phillips as back-tracking too far up the path of traditional political theory and practice; but the work of Young and Mouffe offers an erosion of the centrality of sexual difference to feminist politics that is even less acceptable to them. Whereas Dietz and Phillips, in their effort to think through the shortcomings of republican, liberal, and certain feminist ideas of citizenship find themselves invoking the notion of a possible political commonality beyond plurality, Young and Mouffe appear go in the opposite direction, seeing only difference beyond difference. In relation to Linklater and Miller, theorists such as Young and Mouffe take issue with the reliance either on notions of common humanity or common national identity, but they are equally critical of the focus on the primacy of sexual difference or the orientation to universality which is to be found in Elshtain *et al,* and in Dietz and Phillips, respectively.

POLITICAL COSTS AND BENEFITS

What a feminist conception of citizenship might be is still at issue, and for reasons that relate centrally to the inseparability of the conceptual from the political in feminism. In crude terms, there are - as always in feminist debate - political costs and benefits involved in the feminist conceptions of citizenship I have considered. The emphasis on sexual difference carries the risk of confirming women as second class citizens even as it supports the shift from formal to substantive political equality. The orientation towards universality risks undermining solidarities which have supported women's political participation as women, even as it upholds a radical emancipatory vision. The emphasis on differences between women seems to dislodge both the ground and goal of women's liberation, even as it responds to the specificity of the political values and demands of different women.

Kimberley Hutchings is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Politics at the University of Edinburgh. This is an edited version of a paper, 'Feminist Politics and Cosmopolitan Citizenship', which she gave to the CSD Research Seminar in February 1998, and which will be published in full in K. Hutchings and R. Dannreuther (eds), Cosmopolitan Citizenship *(London: Macmillan, 1999).*

Blairism: Thatcher's Final Victory

If a democratic left is to develop a new hegemonic project, argues **Chantal Mouffe**, *it must recognise the necessity of conflict in politics.*

'It may be that Thatcherism is not finally to be judged in electoral terms. Rather, it should be judged in terms of its success or failure in disorganising the labour movement and progressive forces, in shifting the terms of political debate, in reorganising the political terrain and in changing the balance of political forces in favour of capital and the right.' (Stuart Hall, *The Politics of Thatcherism*, 1983.)

In his January 1979 article in *Marxism Today*, 'The Great Moving Right Show', and in subsequent work, Stuart Hall argued that the populist repertoire of Thatcherism had undermined the social-democratic consensus and created a new common sense around anti-collectivism. Operating directly on the contradictory experience of the popular classes under social-democratic corporatism, Thatcherism had launched an attack on Keynesian policies and state interventionism. By identifying state bureaucracy and creeping collectivism with labourism and actually existing socialism, and counterposing them to the free market and Freedom, Thatcher had been able to undermine the social democratic goals of 'equality of opportunity' and install a new hegemony around neo-liberal values.

This hegemony has not been questioned by New Labour; its politics is informed by the basic ideological parameters of Thatcherism. To be sure, its is a 'Thatcherism with a human face': New Labour is more concerned with the less advantaged and tries to soften the harsh laws of the market. But Labour, too, believes that there is no alternative to the dominant neo-liberal framework. Thatcherism, as Hall showed, was effective in mobilising a political project out of socio-economic and socio-cultural changes; and it managed to appear as if it was the only political project that could flow from these changes. New Labour rightly says that it is operating in profoundly changed conditions and that it has had to adapt to them. But New Labour does not have to claim, as Tony Blair did recently, that there is no such thing as a right -wing or a left-wing economic policy, only a good or a bad one.

New Labour's acceptance of the terrain created by Thatcherism has led it to sacralise consensus, to blur the distinction between left and right, and to insist that politics should now take place in the centre. Blair's constant references to 'the people', and his construction of this people as including sectors usually understood as having opposed interests, echoes Thatcher's own rhetoric. As Hall recalled in the 1979 article, she once told the readers of *Woman's Own*: 'Don't talk to me about 'them' and 'us'. You are all 'we' in a company. You survive as the company survives, prosper as the company prospers - everyone together. The future lies in co-operation and not confrontation.' Co-operation, not confrontation: isn't that the leitmotiv of Blairism!

CONFLICT AND MODERN DEMOCRACY

This approach misses a crucial point, not only about the primary role of strife in social life, but also about the integrative role that conflict plays in modern democracy. The specificity of modern democracy lies in its recognition and legitimation of conflict, and in its refusal to suppress conflict through the imposition of an authoritarian order. Breaking with the symbolic representation of society as an organic body - characteristic of the holist mode of social organisation - a democratic society asserts the centrality of pluralism and makes room for the expression of conflicting interests and values.

Without a vibrant clash of democratic political positions there is a danger that confrontation will take place between non-negotiable moral values or essentialist forms of identifications - as is the case with identity politics. Too much emphasis on consensus leads to political apathy. Disaffection towards political parties sets in and in turn discourages participation in the political process. The result is not a more mature, reconciled society without sharp divisions but the growth of other types of collective identities around religious, nationalist, or ethnic forms of identification. The deplorable spectacle provided by US politics, which has been reduced to the unmasking of sex scandals, provides a good example of the degeneration of the democratic public sphere.

Consensus must be accompanied by dissent. There must be consensus on the institutions that constitute democracy; but there will always be disagreement about the way social justice should be implemented in and through these institutions. In a pluralist democracy such disagreement should be considered legitimate.

POLITICS AND THE POLITICAL

The dominant approach in political theory - rationalistic and individualistic - cannot help us understand current developments. Hence the need to develop an alternative approach, one that grasps the role of power relations in society and the ever present possibility of antagonism.

A conception of politics which acknowledges the centrality of antagonism must start from the distinction between 'the political' and 'politics'. "The political' designates the potential antagonism inherent in all social relations, antagonism which can manifest itself in many different forms. 'Politics' refers to the ensemble of discourses, institutions, and practices the objective of which is to establish an order, to organise human coexistence, and to do so in a context which, because of the presence of 'the political', is always conflictual. Politics is concerned with the formation of an 'us' as opposed to a 'them'. It aims at the creation of unity in a context which is always one of conflict and diversity. Seen from this angle, the novelty of democratic politics is not the overcoming of this us/them opposition but the different form this opposition takes. In a pluralist democratic order an opponent is not an enemy to be destroyed but an adversary whose existence is legitimate and must be tolerated. We will fight her ideas but we will not question her right to defend them.

The dominant approach in political theory - rationalistic and individualistic - cannot help us understand current developments.

This notion of an 'adversary' does not eliminate antagonism, though, and it should be distinguished from the liberal notion of a 'competitor'. An adversary is an enemy with whom we share a commitment to the ethico-political principles of democracy, while disagreeing about their interpretation and implementation. This disagreement, however, involves power relations, and so cannot be resolved by rational argument. Hence the antagonistic element in the relation. To adopt the position of the adversary means undergoing a radical change in political identity and implies a shift in power relations. Of course, compromises are possible but they are only temporary respites in a continuing confrontation in which it is impossible to satisfy everybody.

There is a distinction to be made if one is to grasp the specificity of modern democratic politics: that between antagonism and agonism. Antagonism exists between enemies; agonism between adversaries. Against the two dominant models of democratic politics (the 'aggregative' one that reduces politics to the negotiation of interests, and the 'deliberative' or 'dialogic' model which believes that decisions on matters of common concern should result from the free and unconstrained public deliberation of all) we should see democratic politics as a form of 'agonistic pluralism'. This recognises that power relations exist and entail conflict, and stresses that, in modern democratic politics, the crucial problem is how to transform antagonism into agonism. In other words, the aim of democratic institutions is not to establish a rational consensus in the public sphere; it is to provide democratic channels of expression in which forms of conflicts considered to be legitimate can be expressed.

An acknowledgement that agonistic pluralism is specific to a pluralist democracy allows us to see why democracy requires both that collective identities be formed around clearly differentiated positions and the opportunity to choose between real alternatives. This is precisely the function of the left/right distinction: it gives form to and institutionalises legitimate conflict. If this opposition does not exist or is weakened, the transformation of antagonism into agonism is hindered, with potentially dire consequences for democracy. This is why discourses about the 'end of politics' and the irrelevance of the left/right distinction should be a cause for concern, not celebration.

WHAT KIND OF GLOBALISATION?

One crucial task for left democratic politics is to provide an alternative to neo-liberalism. The left has no credible project because the hegemony of neo-liberal discourse is unchallenged. The usual justification for the 'there is no alternative' dogma is globalisation: redistributive social-democratic policies cannot work because governments are constrained by global markets which allow no deviation from neo-liberal orthodoxy. A conjunctural state of affairs becomes a historical necessity. The mantra of globalisation is invoked to justify the status-quo and reinforce the power of big transnational corporations.

Compromises are only temporary respites in a continuing confrontation in which it is impossible to satisfy everybody.

Andre Gorz has recently argued (*Miseres du present, Richesse du possible*, 1997) that globalisation should not be seen as the necessary consequence of a technological revolution but, instead, as a move by capital to provide a fundamentally political answer to the 'crisis of governability' of the 1970s. The crisis of the Fordist model of development, he argues, led to a divorce between the interests of capital and those of the nation states. The 'space' of politics became dissociated from the 'space' of the economy. Of course, globalisation was made possible by new forms of technology. But this technological revolution was based on a profound transformation in the relations of power among social groups and between capitalist corporations and the state. The result is that corporations have gained a kind of extra-territoriality. They have freed themselves from political power and appear as the real locus of sovereignty. States are unable to tax the transnational corporations: no wonder the resources needed to finance the welfare state are diminishing.

By uncovering the strategies of power which have informed globalisation, Gorz allows us to formulate a counter-strategy. Of course, globalisation cannot be rejected, or resisted solely in the context of the nation state. Only by opposing the power of transnational capital with another globalisation, informed by a different political project, do we have a chance of resisting neo-liberalism successfully and of installing a new hegemony.

Yet such a counter-hegemonic strategy is precisely what is precluded by a radical centrism that denies the existence of antagonisms and the need for political frontiers. To believe that one can reconcile the aims of big corporations with those of the weaker sectors of society is to capitulate to the corporations' power. It is to accept only their globalisation and to act within the constraints that capital imposes on national governments. This approach sees politics as a game in which everybody can win. For the radical centre there is of course neither enemy nor adversary. Everybody is part of 'the people'. The interests of Rupert Murdoch, Formula One, and the rich transnational corporations can be happily reconciled with those of the unemployed, single mothers, and the disabled. Social cohesion is to be secured not through equality and solidarity, but through strong families and shared moral values.

A NEW LEFT-WING PROJECT

Radical politics cannot be located at the centre because to be radical is to aim at a profound transformation of power relations. This cannot be done without drawing political frontiers and defining an adversary or even an enemy. Of course a radical project cannot be successful without winning over many of those who are located at the centre. All significant victories of the left have been the result of an alliance with important sectors of the middle classes whose interests have been articulated to those of the popular sectors. Today such an alliance is vital for the formulation of a radical project. But such an alliance need not take the middle ground and try to establish a compromise between neo-liberalism and the groups it oppresses. There are many issues concerning the provision of decent public services and the creation of good conditions of life on which a broad alliance could be established. However, such an alliance must follow the elaboration of a new hegemonic project that would place on the agenda the struggle for equality discarded by the advocates of neo-liberalism.

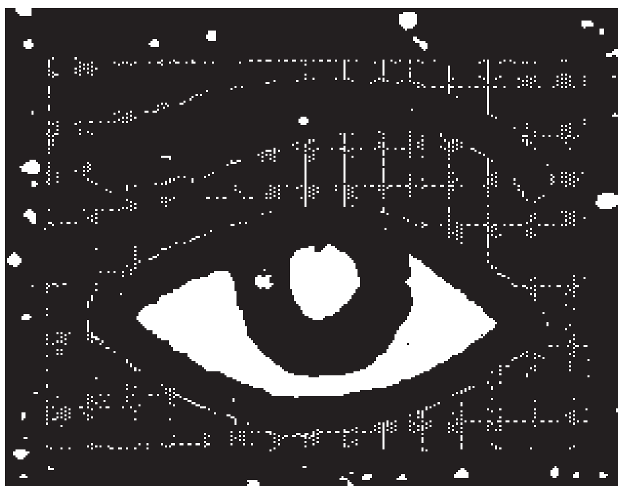
EQUALITY

Perhaps the clearest sign of New Labour's renunciation of its left identity is its abandonment of the struggle for equality. Under the pretence of formulating a modern, post-social democratic conception of equality, the Blairites have eschewed the language of redistribution in order to speak exclusively in terms of inclusion and exclusion. Yet the excluded cannot be included unless wealth is redistributed and the profound inequalities which neo-liberalism has created corrected.

Radical politics cannot be located at the centre because to be radical is to aim at a profound transformation of power relations.

The right has always defended various forms of inequality; the idea of equality is at the centre of the left's vision. The fact that a certain type of egalitarian ideology has been used to justify totalitarian forms of politics should not make us relinquish the struggle for equality. A left-wing project today must envisage this struggle for equality in a way that takes account of the multiplicity of social relations in which inequality flourishes.

This requires, of course, a critique of the shortcomings of traditional social democracy. Stuart Hall showed that Thatcherism was successful because it gave a distinctive voice to popular resentment of those shortcomings. There is nothing wrong, therefore with 'post-social- democratic politics', as long as this does not entail *regressing* to some pre-social democratic liberal view but, instead, envisages a *progression* towards a more radical and pluralist type of democracy. Yet regression appears to underpin the logic of the Blairites' welfare-to-work policies.



CRISIS OF WORK

A post-social-democratic vision informed by a view of complex equality will have one main problem to tackle: the crisis of work and the exhaustion of the wage society. Neither laissez-faire liberalism nor Keynesianism can provide a solution here. The problem of unemployment does indeed call for new radical thinking. Unless we realise that there can be no return to full employment, and that a new model of economic development is urgently needed, no alternative to neo-liberalism will ever take off. The Americanisation of Europe will proceed under the liberal slogan of 'flexibilisation'.

A truly radical project must first acknowledge that, as a consequence of the information revolution, there is a growing dissociation between the production of wealth and the quantity of work needed to produce it. Without a drastic redistribution in the average duration of work, society will become increasingly polarised between those who have stable, regular employment, and the rest, who are either unemployed or have part-time, precarious, and unprotected jobs. At the same the associative sector - in which many activities of crucial social utility but discarded by the logic of the market take place - should be developed so that it can play the important role it deserves alongside the market and the state sector.

The condition for the success of such initiatives is the introduction of some form of decent minimum wage: a citizen's income. An increasing number of people argue that the reform of the welfare state should include not workfare, but just such an income.

Together, these three sets of measures could create the basis for a post-social-democratic answer to neo-liberalism. Of course, such a project could only be carried out successfully in a European context. Capitalism cannot be tamed at the level of the nation state. Only within the context of an integrated Europe, in which different states unite their forces, can the attempt to make finance capital more accountable succeed. If, instead of competing amongst themselves to attract transnational corporations, the European states would agree on common policies, a different kind of globalisation could develop.

We can learn something important from Thatcherism. It is essential to think in terms of the creation of a new hegemony, in terms of a broad, long-term historical perspective. This requires one not only to understand the terrain in which one is operating, but also to elaborate a political response in these new circumstances, to develop a Left political project in changed global conditions. The future of radical politics hinges on our ability to do this.

Chantal Mouffe is a Quintin Hogg Research Fellow at the University of Westminster and a member of CSD. This is an edited version of a paper she gave at a conference on 15 May 1998 in honour of Stuart Hall on his retirement from the Department of Sociology at the Open University.

The Future of Literacy

Niels Jacob Harbitz *criticizes two approaches to the study of literacy and suggests that a quite different theory of literacy is needed*

The meaning of literacy is only apparently self-evident. Two short generations of intense scholarly studies have yet to produce a clear definition of the term. Both studies of and debates about literacy are in a profound state of confusion. Although many of the recent transformations of theories and technologies of communication are immediately relevant to the study of literacy, most participants in debates on the topic have failed to keep up with these changes and renew their ideas accordingly.

Literacy is being discussed today in much the same way as it was when literacy studies first gathered momentum in the early sixties. Scholarly discussions about literacy appear disconnected from the rest of the rapidly developing field of media and communication studies and, indeed, from all other studies of contemporary culture. Literacy, commonly understood as the ability to read and write, is still being defined negatively, in relation to orality. Studies of literacy are still largely retrospective.

GREAT DIVIDE THEORISTS

The first contributors to contemporary literacy studies have come to be known as 'the Great Divide theorists'. Despite the fact that the main scholars of this school - Eric Havelock, Elizabeth Eisenstein, Jack Goody, Walter Ong and Marshall McLuhan - focussed their attention on different times and places in the 2,500 year-long history of alphabetical literacy, the theoretical foundations of their work are strikingly similar. They assume that the means and modes of communication are at the heart of human history. Any significant changes in this heartland automatically qualify as among the most important historical changes overall. In effect, Great Divide theory holds that not only initial transitions from orality to literacy, but all subsequent technological inventions and innovations in the culture of literacy constitute some of the greatest divides in history.

From the outset, there was widespread consensus amongst the early contributors; debate was absent. For the Great Divide theorists who dealt with initial transitions to literacy, there was no doubt that without literacy there is legend and myth, but no history; persuasive speech-making, but no rhetoric; religious practices, but no theology; and folklore and commonplaces, but no philosophy. These scholars also maintained that the emergence of logical, rational, and intellectual reasoning, the rise of the modern subject, the entire tradition of humanist thinking, and the creation of modern democracies, bureaucracies and the nation-state: all are indebted to the single catalyst called the transition to literacy. Implicitly or explicitly, Great Divide theorists argued that illiterates are less cultured and civilised than literates, that literacy should be propagated among the poor and disadvantaged as a vehicle for - and a first step towards - social and economic betterment, and that the skills of reading and writing should be preserved and expanded as a means of promoting and protecting democracy, moral values, and rational thought.

When Great Divide theorists were first writing, the general theoretical climate was in transition. As the 1950s gave way to the 1960s, the dominant position that functionalism had enjoyed was being challenged by structuralism's analytical criticism. Development studies was one of the areas where this theoretical transition was felt particularly strongly. Literacy studies, informed by development studies, followed suit. Early literacy studies took a functionalist approach. The influence of functionalism was evident in literacy studies' tendency to express itself in befores and afters, inputs and outputs, and causes and effects. From structuralism, literacy studies inherited an equally strong habit of organising its material in dichotomies and binary oppositions. However, while functionalism suggests a diachronic approach, structuralism's is more synchronic. And while functionalism is remembered as pragmatic, positivist and progress-oriented, structuralism was more critical, empirically sceptical and pessimistic, especially as far as progress was concerned. Nevertheless, on the topic of literacy, the two approaches still managed to co-operate, even cross-fertilise, and thus merged into a stance so powerful that it still shapes most studies of literacy.

Despite its lasting influence, Great Divide theory suffers from severe shortcomings. Most important, in concentrating almost exclusively on the technologies of literacy - writing, and print and electronic media - the entire tradition of literacy studies has become oblivious to other dimensions of literacy. Such technological determinism hides the fact that literacy is also textual, for instance in a Bakhtinian sense, that is, as an experience mediated by 'any coherent complex of signs'. The immaterial aspects, intellectual content, and purely linguistic dimensions of literacy should be treated as equally important as its technological component. Any analysis of literacy should acknowledge this 'two-sidedness' of its subject: namely, that literacy is both technology and what might be called 'textuality'.

The 'technocentrism' of Great Divide theory was partly legitimised by its focus on Europe. In addition to its Eurocentrism, the work of the Great Divide theorists embodied a strong element of normativism. Sometimes, the two tendencies degenerated into ethnocentrism. Those attempting to refute Great Divide theory have tried to address these issues. However, any opposition is at a disadvantage, especially when an equally strong alternative approach would fall victim to the same criticism that it had directed at Great Divide theory: that it is too all-encompassing and ultimately too powerful. Instead, alternative approaches have largely resorted to singular cases of empirical studies where, they have argued, the sweeping generalisations of the Great Divide theorists do not entirely apply. Hence, while Great Divide theory was overstretched, alternative approaches have proved impotent. For the last decade, this is the impasse in which literacy studies has found itself. The question is, where do we go from here?

FUTURE WORK

First of all, there is an urgent need for literacy studies to connect with other relevant

areas of research: most obviously, with the expanding fields of literary criticism, and media and communication studies. Because literacy is as much text as technology, the tools and theories of content analysis developed within these disciplines are likely to prove beneficial. For as long as there has been literacy, philosophy has taken a strong interest in language. Ever since Plato first questioned the blessings of literacy, philosophy has maintained this interest, and produced an enormous body of relevent work. Politics, sociology, and historiography are addressing the relationships between memory, knowledge, and power. Entire schools in psychology and anthropology are devoted to the study of discourse. For a full understanding of literacy, all of these areas should be considered.

Secondly, despite the enormous impact on the human sciences of the 'discursive turn', this slow revolution still has to turn in on itself, as it were, and make literacy, and the way it has been studied, an area of investigation. Doing so would force literacy studies to become systematically more aware of the implications of its own concepts, representations, and entire language, in other words, to acquire much greater reflexivity. Most other areas in the human sciences have already gone through this process. A full recognition of the potential inherent in such a shift is bound to put an end to literacy studies' technological determinism. Indeed, the change of perspective would inevitably make room for an equally intense scrutiny of the textuality of literacy, and thus reconnect literacy studies with the processes of reading and writing.

Thirdly, these transformations will open the way for the study of literacy to turn its attention to the crucial moments of its own history that cannot be explained in terms of technological innovations: for example, Saint Augustine's inquiries into his relationship with God; Descartes's attempt to prove his own existence; and Nietzsche's and Heidegger's meditations on the relationship between the word and the world. These all came about through and within writing, and could not have happened in any other way. The hermeneutic traditions developed within Christianity, Islam, and other religions are also examples of intellectual/textual exercises that triggered changes in the culture of literacy as crucial as any technological innovation.

Finally, only by boldly broadening its self-imposed boundaries can literacy studies investigate the most complex developments in this field: the convergence - of which there are currently signs - of theories, texts and technologies, most evident in so-called hypertext. In the realm of hypertext, conventional notions, including those of literacy, no longer apply. Hypertext undermines the integrity and linearity of texts. It blurs the boundaries between readers and writers. And it destroys the possibility of setting apart content and form, message and medium, and text and technology. This is the future of literacy studies.

Niels Jacob Harbitz is a PhD candidate at CSD. This is an edited version of a paper he presented to the CSD Research Seminar in May 1998.

CSD Research Seminars

JANUARY 1999

12 Gautam Sen (LSE)
'The BJP and Indian Democracy'

19 Graeme Duncan
(La Trobe University)
' Creating One Nation: Recent Racism in Australia'

26 Adam Watson
'The Limits of Independence: Practice and Theory'
(CSD/DAL Lecture)

FEBRUARY

16 David Dyzenhaus
(University of Toronto)
'Herman Heller: A Democratic Approach to the Rule of Law'

23 Jacob Torfing
(University of Roskilde)
'Towards a Schumpeterian Workfare Postnational Regime: Path Shaping and Path-Dependency in Danish Welfare Reform'

MARCH

9 Nancy Fraser
(New School of Social Research)
'Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics'

16 Kevin Robbins
(University of Newcastle)
'Transnational Media'

23 Richard Luther
(University of Keele)
'Austrian Politics and the Freedom Party'

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'The Great Disruption',

a public lecture by

Professor Francis Fukuyama,

16 June 1999,

University of Westminster