DEMOCRACY
REALITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

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DEMOCRACY AND INDIVIDUAL FIELDS
OF ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE STATE
AND SOCIETY
EDUCATION AS A PRECONDITION FOR DEMOCRACY

PAULUS MZOMUHLE ZULU

SUMMARY

While the relationship between education and democracy is axiomatic, there are mediating factors which determine the type of education and the nature of democracy in operation. Since a specific conception of citizenship determines the form and content of education, as a facilitative process, education becomes a conditional precondition for democracy. An education mediated by different conceptions of citizenship is instrumental in promoting the hegemonic concepts and practices at a given time. This was evident in the pedagogy of the Soviet bloc and to a large extent in other forms of totalitarianism, such as in Germany and Italy and in apartheid in South Africa.

However, in its “pure” form, education has inherent properties which transcend ideologies. It gives the capacity and wisdom to access and process information, to select the relevant from the general and to promote a critical understanding which is fundamental to choice. Democracy is about freedom of choice, equity and justice and no process or practice other than education has the competence to promote these fundamental values.

Introduction

The relationship between education and democracy is axiomatic. From Plato’s philosopher rulers, to Aristotle and down to Paulo Frere’s pedagogy of the oppressed, education has been accepted as a sound facilitator for participation in an informed decision making process. What has been in dispute, particularly since Karl Marx, is the type of education and the nature of democracy, the assumption being that democracy is informed by a specific conception of citizenship. What I want to argue for in this paper is that a specific conception of citizenship determines the form and content of education and that depending upon that content, education can either be a precondition for democracy or can be used as an instrument of maintaining power relations.
which, in the end, might lead to an erosion of the basic freedoms of citizens.

Power and Powerlessness

John Gaventa recalls an incident where together with a community organiser they had climbed a narrow path to a mountain cabin to talk to a retired miner about joining with others in a lawsuit challenging the low taxation of the corporate coal property which surrounded the miner’s home. After listening attentively to the account of the local injustices which Gaventa and other students had ‘discovered’ the miner showed no surprise, as he had known of the inequities since the land of his father had been expropriated by the coal lords.

Gaventa continues “I had read the theories of democracy, about how victims of injustice in an ‘open system’ are free to take action upon their concerns, about how conflicts emerge and are resolved through compromises among competing interests. Overlooking the valley from the miners’ porch, what I saw seemed to question the lessons I had learnt.” (Gaventa, J., 1980:V). Confronted with glaring powerlessness in the face of gross exploitation, Gaventa made this observation in the Appalachian Valley across parts of Kentucky and Tennessee in the United States, a country hailed as the world’s leading democracy and this observation was made as recently at the 1970s. Similarly, at the beginning of the twenty-first century in South Africa, the leading democracy on the continent, traditional leaders are fighting the Demarcation Board which seeks to incorporate rural areas, adjacent to urban municipalities, in a system that will enable rural residents to access services and amenities in better resourced urban metropolises. Rural residents are ‘surprisingly’ silent in this battle for borders. In both instances, the deafening silence by the affected parties is telling. In the Appalachian Valley miners remained silent while the American Association Ltd, a British company, plundered their land. In South Africa rural inhabitants have maintained an apparent complacency while traditional leaders rape their rights and confine them to eternal subservience. Yet both
countries are modern democracies, each endowed with an elaborate constitution and a bill of rights. Why have such inequities leading to gross travesties of justice evoked neither protest nor comment from the victims given the heritage of democracy in both countries? Regarding inequalities and the absence of challenge to inequities in the Appalachian Valley Gaventa observes: “I began to read literature which challenged some of the more elitist democratic theories to which I had previously been exposed...In situations of inequality the political response of the deprived may be seen as a function of power relationships” (Ibid: VI). He continues: “Power works to develop and maintain the quiescence of the powerless. Rebellion, as a corollary, may emerge as power relationships are altered. Together, patterns of power and powerlessness can keep issues from arising, grievances from being voiced and interests from being recognised.” (Ibid: VII). The South African case is recent and no academics have commented as yet; if they ever will do, it will be a historical rejoinder.

The thrust of this paper is on education as both an instrument and a leveller and therefore a precondition for the capacity to maintain or alter power relations in societies since it is only when there is a balance in the power relations that citizens can participate effectively in processes and decisions that affect their lives. The opposite holds as well. While the traditional pluralist approach to democracy focuses on participation in the decision making process, the central argument in this paper is that representative democracy as a widely practiced form of popular participation can degenerate easily into rule by the elite. This is essentially so where huge disparities in information exist. Education as both information and a tool for accessing information is, therefore, a fundamental prerequisite to the capacity to participate democratically in decisions that affect individuals and groups. Sigdi’s operationalisation of democracy as “...the people’s participation in decision making through the choice, accountability and change of their representatives and governments” (Sigdi, Kaballo, 1995) becomes hollow in the absence of a requisite education to inform participants on the quality of alternatives as well as on the nature and mode of accountability, or on
how to proceed should such accountability not be forthcoming. For instance, despite periodic elections, miners in the Appalachian Valley returned the same officials to office and in two successive general elections in South Africa, voters in the province of KwaZulu-Natal have returned the Inkatha Freedom Party, a party dominated by traditional authorities, to the government of the province.

I want to argue in this paper that societies and communities are either educated into subservience to authoritarianism or out of subservience into participatory democracy. Either way, a process of socialisation which reinforces norms and values specific to each form of rule is a precondition to the success of each regime. I do concede that despite this process of socialisation, a good formal education is on its own a liberator. Hence there exist strong correlations between what approximates true participatory democracy and a critical mass of formally well educated citizens. For instance, Western Europe, the United States and Japan do not only enjoy advanced economic conditions, they also command well educated mass bases. Consequently, democracy operates relatively more smoothly than is the case in countries with a poorly educated mass base such as is the case in a number of countries in Africa and Latin America. Education widens the range of options both political and economic and also facilitates access to information and the capacity to use that information prudently.

There are two critical questions which need answers if an assessment of education as a precondition for democracy has to be made. The first is: How do non democratic regimes manage to exclude masses from participation if participation is a desirable condition for accessing resources which everybody needs and wants?. And the second is: Under what conditions do the masses break from the stalemate of exclusion?. In the first instance individuals and groups are socialised or educated out of participation either by being denied access to information or by suppressing their capacity to utilise that information discerningly. In the second case individuals and groups are given the capacity to analyse and appraise their own situation. Both processes involve a form of education.
The Mobilisation of Bias

With regard to the maintenance and sustenance of exclusionary conditions Schattschneider, Gaventa, Bachrac and Baratz have responded by advancing the concept of mobilisation of bias where an ensemble of ideological and institutional practices is employed by those in power to exclude masses from true democracy through compliance, depoliticisation and fear. Through a process of mobilisation of bias critical items are either organised out of the agenda or reformulated in terms favourable to the elite. Relations of power are mediated in various ways, the most subtle, and therefore successful of which, is ideology. In the exclusion of masses from democratic participation, ideology is a powerful educational tool. Conversely, to see through ideological smokescreens and to be able to organise and mobilise against oppression, individuals have to overcome the mobilisation of bias. In the words of Paulo Frere the oppressed need a pedagogue who will enable them to break through the ideological chains of authoritarianism and oppression.

Democracy as a Concept and in Practice

Before we discuss how the mobilisation of bias has been employed successfully by authoritarian elites to exclude masses from participatory democracy, a closer examination of the concept of democracy itself is necessary. Offe described democracy as “a (system) of equal political rights of participation and representation within a framework of strongly protected individual liberties and divisions of state powers” (Claus Offe, 1955: 21). For Offe two principal participants are vital to the functioning of a representative democracy. They are:

i. The citizens; and
ii. elites (representative).

It is when the balance of power between mass citizens and representative elites shifts in favour of the elites that true democracy ceases to exist. Hence, according to Offe, democratic forms of government
have a life cycle. “Democracies are born at a certain point in time and under certain circumstances and it would at least be naive to exclude the possibility that they can die.” (Ibid: 21). What is of interest to analysts are the preconditions for the birth and the sustenance of democracy as well as those conditions which may be employed to kill or subvert democracies. Both conditions pertain to the relations between citizens and elites.

Giddens would maintain that Offe’s definition of democracy stops at a set of representative institutions guided by certain values and therefore falls short of explaining relations between participants. It thus suffers the limitations of liberal democracy (see below). In Giddens’s conception there is an extended definition to include deliberative democracy as “a way of getting or trying to get agreement about policies in the political arena”. The deliberative ideal “starts from the premise that political preferences will conflict and that the purpose of democratic institutions must be to resolve this conflict”. He continues: “for such conflict resolution to be democratic...it must occur through an open and uncoerced discussion of the issue at stake with the aim of arriving at an agreed judgement (Giddens, 1998: 113)”.

Giddens’ extended definition makes certain assumptions which are vital for the operation of the true democracy.

i) There should be recognised and acknowledged equality among participants so that views expressed by the various parties are accepted as being of equal value.

ii) For such views to be acceptable by all parties as being of equal value there should be equal access to information and a corresponding capacity by all parties to process information. This is particularly essential when taking into account that deliberative democracy accepts that solutions are contested.

The above assumptions call for a levelling of the playing field. Part of this levelling of the playing field entails accountability which implies the right to, and availability of, information on the activities of delib-
erative assemblies, and in the case of representative democracy on the activities of elected representatives. The right to, and availability of, information would not be of much help if those to whom information is made available do not have the power or capacity to utilise such a right for the public advantage.

Democracy and Civil Society

There has always been general consensus on the positive correlation between true democracy and the existence of a vibrant civil society. (Mills, Jefferson, Giddens, Frere, Mamdani etc). A vibrant civil society means active citizenship and fulfils one of the conditions set by Offe as vital to the functioning of a democracy. Referring to the role of education in the creation and promotion of active citizenship Martin quotes Johnson who states: “In every era people have needed ‘really useful knowledge’ (i.e. knowing why) as well as merely ‘useful knowledge’ (i.e. knowing what and how) in order to act collectively as citizens.” (Martin, I.: 1999). It is, however, our understanding of the meaning of citizenship that situates education and democracy in perspective. Different conceptions of citizenship and, therefore, of democracy bring with them distinctive forms of education as a precondition for each form of citizenship. A closer look into these forms of citizenship will help place education in perspective.

Liberal Democracy

Giddens refers to liberal democracy as “essentially a system of representation. It is a form of government characterised by regular elections, universal suffrage, freedom of conscience and the universal right to stand for office or to form political associations.” (Giddens, 1994: 112). Were it not for the relativity with which the foregoing attributes are enjoyed in practice, liberal democracy would be the ultimate ideal. Shortcomings have been found more in emphasis than in the concept. Liberal democracy has placed an accent on the operation of market
forces as if such operation takes place on a tabula rasa. My contention is that market forces are driven ideologically where access to them is mediated through relations of power and powerlessness. In liberal democracy, citizenship is constructed in terms of production and consumption as if the two were ends in themselves and also as if there were no intervening factors between production and consumption. The fact of life is that there are. I would argue for the non-independence of market forces on the simple basis that a number of processes mediate between individuals and the market place. Part of these processes entail the handicaps that prevent certain groups and individuals from entering the market place altogether, and those that limit individuals and groups from full participation. In South Africa, for instance a separatist educational system ensured that ‘non-citizens’ as defined out of mainstream society by apartheid were handicapped by their educational system despite what appeared to be equivalent paper qualifications. As a consequence there was a disproportionately large school drop out rate among Africans. The result is that despite the new democratic constitution which provides for equal participation by all citizens in the economy, significant managerial positions in the market place are filled by white citizens far out of proportion to their overall numbers in the population. This is in spite of corrective or affirmative action measures adopted in employment policies. This is equally true in the significant sections of the public sector. For instance, while whites account for less than fifteen percent of the total population, over eighty percent of positions of control in the South African Police Services are occupied by white persons. Given the significance of a professional and neutral police service in the operation of a democracy, and the racial origins of conflict in the South African political history, the question is: to what extent would democracy depend on the professional neutral role of the police services especially in the management of racial conflict should such conflict spill over from the debating chambers into living space? At one extreme the police could hold parliament and the whole country to ransom. Quoting Paulo Frere, Martin posits the idea that human beings are more than economic animals. He contends that it is not only
that “our ontological vocation is to produce and consume and to have rather than to be.” (Op. cit). Realising the centrality of education in the attainment of its constructed form of democracy, liberal democracy has introduced an ideology which has modelled educational practice along the lines of production institutions and units. This has resulted in funding formulas for universities being based on the compatibility of university administration and curricula with corporate values of production. The consequences are far reaching for both education and democracy. Where education for democracy stresses the primacy of education as a public service designed to address social ills, liberal democracy driven by corporate culturalism emphasises the role of education as the preparation of individuals for the filling of slots in the social division of labour. So pervasive is the corporate influence on education that Giroux decries its impact on research as eroding the basic freedoms of individuals and societies. Citing the case of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and other institutions of higher education in the United States which have entered into partnerships with corporations and sold part of their curricula to private corporations, thus ignoring basic scientific research, Giroux quotes Ralph Nader who asserts that “the universities are doing far too little to develop anti malaria and tuberculosis vaccines at a time when these diseases are once again killing large numbers of people in the third world countries.” (Giroux, 1999).

The conception of citizenship in liberal democracy creates a fundamental tension in education as a precondition for democracy, primarily because of the core values. True democracy is a means to an end where participation leads to the realisation of justice, equality, freedom, respect for the rule of law and solidarity, all of which cannot be measured in commercial terms. Such values cannot be substituted or replaced by productive and consumptive capacities which are only means and not ends in themselves.

The onus to correct the imbalances of the liberal democratic conception of citizenship rests with educated citizens who can and should recognise the fallacy of equating the corporate principles of efficiency with public virtues such as freedom, equality and justice.
Traditionalism

A traditionalist conception of citizenship arises out of a blurring of boundaries between the religious and the secular. The consequences are a diffusion of roles where traditional authorities conceive of themselves as representatives of their populations. Citizens are defined or treated mainly as subjects despite the provisions in the national constitutions. The rights of traditional elites (often ascribed) override those of ordinary citizens in the name of culture and tradition. Part of the cause of this state of affairs is the scarcity of resources leading to a lack of, or an inadequate, education, both formal and instrumental, on the part of the masses who, because of this, lack the intellectual tools of reasoning and aspirations compatible with democracy.

This is particularly so in post colonial societies where traditionalism has mediated between elites and citizens, leading to the development of a bifurcated state, the rural and urban sections. Relatively better economic and, therefore, educational conditions have, in this case, led to the development of a secular culture contributing to the rise of a vibrant civil society in urban areas. The opposite has occurred in rural areas. This was particularly in the interests of both the colonial powers, who saw an advantage in keeping colonial societies subservient through indirect rule, and the co-opted traditional elites who co-operated in this dominance, albeit qualified, in order to retain their relative advantage of privilege. The bifurcated state has had to enjoy limited democracy where at the rural extreme there was, and still exists, representation with very little if any significant participation. Therefore, despite electoral reforms targeted at the central state, the local state in rural areas is saddled with a decentralised despotism (Mamdani, 1996). The debate by traditional authorities over the demarcation of boundaries in South Africa referred to above falls squarely within this domain. Neither market forces nor true participatory democracy operate in rural areas, the first because traditional power is ascribed and not market determined hence ordinary citizens have no access to it; and the second because access to decision making is predicated on ascriptive criteria which exclude ordinary citizens. It is only when a critical mass of citi-
zens is educated enough to break from the shackles of tradition that the countryside will be freed from elite oppression.

Educating for Democracy

Speaking at the International IDEA Democracy Forum held in Stockholm in 1997 about accessing participatory democracy to the masses of the people, Frene Ginwala, the Speaker of the South African legislature, declared: “There are only two alternatives, either you bring the law maker’s language closer to the people, or you raise the educational levels of the entire population” (Ginwala, 1997). The truth is that there is only one alternative, to raise the educational levels of the entire population. The first alternative of bringing the law maker’s language closer to the people means writing laws in simple language that people will understand. That is an automatic step to exclusion through participation. The complex relationships inherent in legal systems are conceptual and not linguistic. Simplifying these complex relationships loses the nuances, and hence the masses will be participating as juniors or subordinates and not as equals.

Critical Pedagogy

A sound education broadens the cognitive frames of reference, develops the capacity to think critically, and facilitates the range of options. Commenting on the limitations of the philosophical traditions of liberalism and republicanism in American education, Kampol Barry advances the concept of a critical pedagogy as a means to promote transformation in education in order to educate for democracy. According to the author, as a pedagogy: “This acknowledges social injustices and examines with care and in dialogue with itself and others how injustice works through the discourses, experiences, and desires that constitute daily life and subjectivities of the student who invests in them” (Kampol Barry, 1993). What are these injustices, discourses, experiences and subjectivities? They are the experiences of power and power-
lessness leading to participation and exclusion from participation. They are predicated on ideology, race, class, gender and social origin, and together they constitute and define citizenship. They are complex relationships which can not be simplified in linear explanations, and to understand and appraise them critically calls for an enabling education.

Fundamental conceptions of democracy from Plato and Aristotle to Thomas Aquinas and Gramski are premised on an education designed to develop in each individual the fundamental capacity to think critically and an ability to find one’s way in life. Gramski refers to this type of education as a common basic education imparting a general humanistic formative culture. (Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith eds., 1971). In political terms, an education for democracy will educate students in the analysis of how power works in producing and shaping knowledge and how ideological barriers to democracy such as class, race, age, gender and birthplace lead to one form of domination or another. It is an accepted truism that critical thinking is not only a function of inherent genetic capacity, but is also mediated through an education that equips individuals to analyse situations, work out alternatives and make informed choices.

Conclusion

It is evident from the discourse in this paper, that an education mediated by different conceptions of citizenship is instrumental in promoting the hegemonic concepts and practices at a given time. The variant of democracy operating at the time will be a function of the dominant ideals and practices. However, as a concept education has immutable and fundamental properties which transcend ideologies. It is both an enabler and a leveller. The capacity to access information, to select the relevant from the general, and to process that information critically is fundamental to choice, and it is on the basis of informed options that individuals make valid choices. If democracy is about freedom of choice, equity and justice, then education is a precondition for democracy.
List of Literature


DEMOCRACY, PUBLIC OPINION AND THE MEDIA*

JANUSZ ZIOLKOWSKI

SUMMARY

I. Public Opinion

Even though the notion of public opinion had been subject to debate ever since antiquity, the breakthrough really came with the Enlightenment, Rousseau’s concepts of volonté générale and opinion générale, and the French Revolution. In the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries a modern definition made its appearance. Scholars were concerned, among other things, with the development of public opinion: the influence of democratisation upon its growth and the moral implications of broadening the opinion base; the relationship of public opinion to the procedures of democratic government; and the role of public opinion in the rise of political and economic power. In the twentieth century emphasis has been placed both on the value of conceptualisation and of the problem-statement in this area, as well as on the empirical analysis of public-opinion phenomena, such as the value of opinion polls for legislative processes and public policy in a democratic society. In our time public opinion has been inseparably linked with the fate and progress of democracy, with its rise and fall. Over two hundred years since the term was born, the ‘Queen of the World’ has convincingly revealed its potent force. It brought about the ‘annus mirabilis’ of 1989, and by the same token enlarged the democratic space from the Atlantic to the Urals.

II. The Media

What uniquely defines this century is the exponential growth of sciences and new technologies. In the second half of the last hundred years industrialisation based on

* Because of the death of Professor Ziolkowski (see preface) the text of this paper was not revised by the author. The version published here has been revised by the editor.
mechanistic technology has given way to electronic technologies. Their overwhelming presence at the turn of the second and third millennia has changed modes of thought, the manner in which meanings are conveyed, and the way in which the images of the world are formed. In the mass media of communication the media, characteristically, seem to have become an end, not a means. What do these changes portend? Will electronic technology outpace the ability to harness it to socially acceptable ends? Are electronic technologies heading towards an overload of information and, consequently, of reception, and thus towards ultimate impoverishment rather than to greater diversity, creativity and autonomy? What will happen to communities and interpersonal bonding in an electronic society? What should be our response in this era of globalisation to the power of electronic empires to manipulate the social image-world? The mass media of communication, having acquired an increasingly economic, socio-cultural and political character, in the ultimate analysis, pose a challenge to the functioning of democracy.

I

Possibly the vital factor in the functioning of a democratic system is a democratic attitude. This means a belief that all men are equal, and a feeling one might call a sympathetic understanding of people. Such sympathetic understanding of others, their joys and griefs gives rise to an equal recognition of human personalities. The value of “myself” ceases to be essentially different from the value of another’s “self”. And so a democratic attitude becomes a basis of impartiality.

C. Znamierowski (1888-1967)

1. The basic aim of the paper is to examine the place and role played by two phenomena, i.e., public opinion and the media, in the democratic process. (A footnote: both issues are of vital importance for the functioning of democracy. Both are overwhelming in regard to the scope and complexity of the problems involved. An uneasy question arises as to how justice could possibly be done to them in the allotted space. Well, one cannot but try). I would like to start with the concept of opinion itself. In a nutshell, in social science it is understood as “a judgement, a conviction”, a view or belief held by a person on some
issue. It may be expressed or covertly based on value judgements or on any kind of reasoning or evidence. Opinions have many attributes. For instance, we distinguish degrees of clarity in an opinion, degrees of strength or emphasis, and degrees of salience and of ego-involvement. Opinions are generally expressed on fairly narrow and specific points, and a number of expressed opinions may allow us to infer the existence of an underlying, more general attitude.\textsuperscript{1}

As far as the adjective \textit{public} is concerned, it indicates the supposed common interests and objectives of all or at least a majority of the people in a political unit, such as public agencies, public welfare, public interest, public work, public building, public domains, public services, etc. In this usage the \textit{public} refers to the membership of the political unit. It is congruent with an amorphous social structure whose members share a community of interest that has been produced by impersonal communication and contact. One may belong to as many publics as one has interests. Furthermore, a public may or may not coincide with physical, geographical, or political units.\textsuperscript{2}

2. The roots of the concept of public opinion lie deep in the past. There was no explicit single formulation of it prior to the eighteenth century and no systematic treatment of it until the nineteenth, but in earlier writings one finds a foreshowing of, and approximation to, modern theorising about public opinion. The Greeks launched the endeavour. In his \textit{Politieia}, Aristotle appraised the political competence of the masses in positive terms. The principle that the multitude should be supreme contains “an element of truth. Hence, the many are better judges...for some understand one part and some another; and among them they understand the whole.”

Certain phrases and ideas in the political and juristic vocabulary of the Romans and in the writings of the medieval period are likewise related to some aspects of the modern concept of public opinion. Cic-


ero – like many other Romans of the classical period – had little respect for the *vulgus*. In his oration on behalf of Quintus Roscius we find the line: *Sic est vulgus: ex veritate pausa, ex opinione multa aestimat*. The Romans did not use the words “public opinion” but the concept was so familiar to them that they worked with it as though it was something which was self-evident. Separate aspects of public opinion appear in classical terms: *fama, public reputatio, rumor, vox populi, consensus gentium*, the latter as a basis of legal and political sovereignty. Of medieval origin is the well known saying *Vox populi, vox Dei*.

The idea that opinions are the origin of authority was a product of the post-Renaissance secularisation of the state voiced by Machiavelli in the sixteenth century. In his *Discorsi* he wrote as follows: “Not without reason is the voice of the people compared to the voice of God”. This was quoted approvingly during the years which followed.

Tributes to the power of opinion became increasingly frequent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Pascal hailed opinion as “the Queen of the World”. Hobbes declared that “they say truly and properly that the world is governed by opinion”. Locke distinguished three classes of laws: divine law, civil law and “the law of opinion or reputation”. And Hume argued that “all governments, however despotic, are based upon opinion”.3

3. A real breakthrough came with Rousseau. He applied the theory of popular infallibility to the state itself. In his first discussion of the *volonté générale* he came to the conclusion that “the most general will is also the most just” and that the voice of the people is the voice of God. In his most influential work *Du contrat social* (1762) he pays tribute to the power of opinion. He wrote: “Indeed, whatever the form of government, the most fundamental of all laws is that of opinion. Political, civil and criminal laws are based upon it”. In his *Lettre à M.*

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d’Alembert (1762) he proclaims the key words: “the government can influence morals (moeurs) only through public opinion” (l’opinion publique). Thus he laid the basis for further development of the concept. In his last important political treatise, Considerations sur le gouvernement de Pologne (1772), he writes: “Whoever makes it his business to give laws to a people must know how to sway opinions and through them govern the passions of men”.4

It was also at the time of the tumultuous French revolution that the concept of public opinion – which was previously rather esoteric, confined to the learned circles, and which performed the role of a catchword or slogan – was given thorough intellectual treatment.

This was due to a large extent to a Genevan, Jacques Necker, the finance minister to Louis XVI. In his writings he discussed in detail the nature and significance of public opinion as a factor in statecraft. Public opinion, he argued, strengthens or weakens all human institutions. Only fools, pure theorists or apprentices in moral philosophy fail to take public opinion into account in their political undertakings. Most foreigners have difficulty in understanding the nature of an invisible force (my italics) which, without treasures, without bodyguards, and without any army, gives laws to the city, to the court, and even to the palaces of the king. Public opinion is at once stronger and more enlightened than the law. It may be regarded as a tribunal (my italics) before which all statesmen must be accountable, and must be enlightened by publicity if its judgements are to be correct. It is the principal safeguard (my italics) against the abuse of political authority.

4. It was at this juncture of history that two momentous events occurred which determined the course of democracy in the years to come. They were: the American Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man (1788). According to G. Sartori,5 the concept of the public opinion was of prime importance in both. There was a basic difference between the two events. The

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4 Palmer, op. cit. pp. 4-5.
American Declaration of Independence was not a revolution in the strict sense: it was secession. The basic innovation (not the only one, though) was the replacement of a monarch, to whom a special religious and symbolic significance was attached, by the head of a constitutional republic. In France, however, it was a fully-fledged revolution, i.e., a complete upheaval of the existing political and social system. During this tumultuous era the role of what was called “public opinion” cannot be overrated. It was a potent social and political force. “Queen of the World”, indeed, it brought on the revolution, made and unmade statesmen, and was a check on the holders of power.

5. What follows is a brief account of the views on the subject expressed by noted philosophical, political and legal thinkers of the nineteenth century.

The influence of the French revolution is visible very early in German thought. The phrase “öffentlich Meinung” appears in many publications. Mention should be made of: C. M. Wieland, called the “German Voltaire”, who speaks of it as “an opinion that without being noticed takes possession of most heads”; J. Fries, who in public opinion sees the basis of the rule of law within the state; F. Ancillon, who considers public opinion as “the principal power in the political world”; and C. von Gersdorf, who, in Über den Begriff und das Wesen der öffentlichen Meinung (1846), provides a very detailed analysis of public opinion during the first half of the nineteenth century by tracing, among other things, its relation to the sovereignty of law.

Of British thinkers at the early stage of the inquiry about the nature of the new concept one should mention especially J. Bentham (1748-1832). Throughout his writings he insisted on the importance of public opinion as an instrument of social control. In his political treatises, compiled after 1814, he regarded the free expression of public opinion as the chief safeguard against misrule (my italics) and as the characteristic mark of a democratic state. He considered to the full the relation between public opinion and legislation. “Public opinion”, he stated by way of definition, “may be considered as a system of law emanating from the body of the people”. Lastly, he recognised in the newly estab-
lished newspaper press the most important factor there was in the formation and expression of public opinion.6

6. The fully-fledged treatment of the nature as well as the role played by public opinion in the democratic process started with two towering figures of the nineteenth century, Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill. Their thinking has served ever since as a point of departure and stimulus for further discussion on the subject.

De Tocqueville achieved fame with his profound and prophetic study *De la démocratie en Amérique* (1835-1840). He was fascinated by the problem of power in the modern democratic state as it presented itself “on the other side of the Ocean”. Distinction between authority and power is fundamental in de Tocqueville, authority being the inner nature of association, rooted in function and allegiance, while power is coercion, generally with the implication of externally applied force.

As regards the main issue under discussion, de Tocqueville’s dominating interest in the role of public opinion as an important factor in the functioning of modern democracy followed from his view that the focus of democratic power is to be found in mass majorities. To his mind, the sway of public opinion could be stifling to individuality. He spoke of “the tyranny of the majority”.

Robert A. Nisbet, in his analysis of de Tocqueville’s thought, wrote the following on the subject: “It does not seem to have occurred to him that public opinion is something that can be manufactured as well by minority pressure groups. He conceived of it as a more or less direct emanation from the political masses. But if he did not explore its sources and variable expressions, he nevertheless correctly identified it as a new and powerful force in the modern state, one henceforth crucial to the legitimacy of governments. Equally important, Tocqueville, in contrast to most political conservatives of his day, feared not the instability but stability of public opinion in democracy, a stability so great, in his view, that not only political revolution but even intellectual innovation would become increasingly unlikely.”7

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6 Palmer, *op. cit.* pp. 7-10.
7. Let us turn now to John Stuart Mill (1806-73), one of the most representative and versatile British thinkers of the nineteenth century. In his widely acclaimed *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) he gave a brilliant exposition of what is meant by representative government, in conjunction with the place and role played in it by public opinion, it may be added. In Chapter II, *The Criterion of a Good Government*, he maintains that government improves in quality “where the officers of government, themselves persons of superior virtue and intellect, are surrounded by the atmosphere of a virtuous and enlightened public opinion.”8 We find the problem of public opinion again in Chapter V: *The Proper Function of Representative Bodies*. He writes: “Instead of the function of governing, for which it is clearly unfit, the proper office of a representative assembly is to watch and control government” and that a representative assembly is “the nation’s Committee of Grievances, and its Congress of Opinions, an arena in which not only the general opinion of the nation, but that every section of it can produce itself in full light and challenge discussion; where every person in the country may count upon finding somebody who speaks his mind.”9

It is not surprising that J.S. Mill in his treatise on *Representative Government* also tackled the intricate problem of the majority versus the minority. In Chapter VII, *Of True and False Democracy; Representation of All, and Representation of the Majority*, he wrote, *inter alia*: “that the minority must yield to majority, the smaller number to the greater, is a familiar idea. But does it follow that the minority should have no representatives at all? Because the majority ought to prevail over the minority, must the majority have all the votes, the minority none? Is it necessary that the minority should not even be heard?... In a really equal democracy, every or any section would be represented, not disproportionately, but proportionately”.10

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8 The selections taken from J. S. Mill's *Considerations on the Representative Government*, 1861, in: *Introduction to Contemporary Civilisation in the West*, p. 441.
8. The appearance and development of the concept of public opinion at the end of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century was aptly summarised by George C. Thompson. In his considerations on the questions under discussion he stated, first, that the notion “public opinion” is really nothing but a metaphor, for thought is an attribute of a single mind, and “the public” is an aggregate of many minds. Second, that a few men who hold a definite opinion earnestly and on rational grounds, in other words an opinion that rests on some basis of evidence, will outweigh a greater number who merely entertain a slight preference which they cannot explain because it is something vague and general. Third, speaking more generally, there are four principal characteristics which, it seems, should be taken into account in the evaluation of public opinion: – diffusion, persistence, intensity and reasonableness. Fourth, it may be said that in the last analysis all political opinions (except those that are the outcome of mere self-interest) must ultimately rest upon instincts; that is to say, upon moral sentiments of approval or reprobation, and upon emotional proclivities of like or dislike. This kind of public opinion he suggested should be seen as bias.

9. The process of tracing the development of the nature of public opinion had hitherto been based on the scholarly effort of philosophers and political theorists. In the latter part of the nineteenth century the contribution of the newly established social science disciplines, such as sociology and social psychology, became more and more important.

10. The new approach centred on the study of non-rational, emotional factors at work in the formation and expression of public opinion. Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931) demonstrated this with great vigour. He wrote: “The century we enter now will be a true era of the crowd. The blind force of numbers becomes the only philosophy of history. Crowd psychology reveals to what extent law and institutions are helpless in the face of their impulsiveness, and how unable are crowds to

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have whatever opinions have not been suggested.”

Le Bon did not write of the crowd in the colloquial sense but of organised crowds – in other words, of crowds in a psychological sense – which meant that a grouping of people subjected to general suggestion led to the creation of a kind of “soul”.

11. Gabriel Tarde (1843-1904) was more cautious and suggested that the word “crowd” should only be used to denote the situation of a physical proximity of a certain number of individuals. More importantly, he postulated creating a psychology of the public, an entity he considered to be much more characteristic of the community before modern times. According to Tarde the public was characterised by spatial distribution which was always connected by a spiritual proximity which grows with the perfecting of the means of opinion exchange. Writing about “suggesting at a distance”, Tarde expressed much that connected him to American pragmatists with their stress on the problems of communication. It was also Tarde who with keen insight insisted on the importance of the intensity of belief as a factor in the spread of opinions. One man – he maintained – who holds his belief tenaciously counts for as much as several men who hold theirs weekly. This is, perhaps, true of moral questions.

12. So much for the nineteenth century which, historically speaking, lasted until World War One. What appeared in the twentieth century was the scholarly, modern study of public opinion based on the analyses of sociologists, social psychologists, legal and political scientists, and demographers. Research activity in the study of public opinion expanded tremendously. New and increasing numbers of research techniques, such as the statistical analysis of opinion, news and attitudes by means of polls and questionnaires, were applied.

It was Bernard Berelson who distinguished several characteristics which public opinion research did not have at the beginning. It was (a) primarily American; (b) academic; (3) the result of team research; (d)
Public opinion is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Efforts to define the term precisely have led to such expressions of frustration as: “Public opinion is not the name of something, but a classification of a number of somethings”. Yet, despite the differences in definitions, students of public opinion generally agree at least that it is “a collection of individual opinions on an issue of public interest, and they usually note that these opinions can exercise influence over individual behaviour, group behaviour, and government policy”.

13. What follows is a concise examination of internal relationships among individual opinions that make up public opinion on an issue. One may say right away that public opinion seems to possess qualities that make it something more than a sum of individual opinions on an issue. It is presumed to have a force and vitality unconnected with any specific individual.

14. This was emphasised by Ferdinand Tönnies (1864-1920) who observed that “whatever may come to be considered a public opinion, it confronts the individual with an opinion which is in part an extraneous power”; members of a community in their behaviour are directed by faith, and members of a society by public opinion.

15. Another eminent sociologist of this period, Charles H. Cooley (1864-1929), in tune with American political tradition and his own philosophy, did not contrast society with the state, but saw in society’s development a phase of the spread of public opinion whose other aspects included the growth of voluntary associations, trade unions, corporations, clubs, fraternities, etc. He described public opinion as no mere aggregate of separate individual judgements, but an organisation, a co-operative product of communication and reciprocal influence.

17 Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (1887).
16. Ideas such as these resulted later on in the abandonment of the search for an entity or content labelled “public opinion” that can be discovered and then analysed; emphasis was placed instead on the study of multi-individual situations and of the relationships among the opinions held by various people in these situations.18

If public opinion is viewed as a species of organisation or as a bundle of relationships, questions arise as to what the nature of these relationships is, how they are formed, how they persist and why they dissolve.

17. The formation of public opinion in a given grouping of people occurs through the give and take of discussion. Ordinarily, the public is made up of interest groups and more detached and disinterested spectator-like bodies. The issue that creates a public opinion is usually set by contending interest groups. A given public opinion is likely to be anywhere between a highly emotional and prejudiced point of view, and an intelligent and informed opinion. The net result of the interplay of these two groups may well be a biased, prejudiced opinion about the matter in question. Walter Lippman,19 while exploring the psychological process of opinion formation, introduced into the social sciences the term stereotype to refer to preconceived ideas or beliefs about the attributes of the external world (he wrote of “pictures in our heads”).

In sociology, after the appearance of Lippman’s study, a stereotype denoted “a belief which is not held as an hypothesis buttressed by evidence but is rather mistaken in whole or in part for an established fact”.20 The term was further developed by social psychology, where stereotypes are as a rule referred to as the cognitive component of one particular attitude – prejudice.

18. We now turn to the second area, i.e. the political role of public opinion. One is concerned here not with the “causes” of opinion but with its consequences. Our central consideration in this area is the ways

19 Public Opinion (1922).
20 A Dictionary of the Social Sciences, p. 694.
in which public opinion is, or should be, applied in the determination of public policy.

One may safely say that the constantly increasing use of the term over the past two hundred years or so testifies to its utility. This is so because in the democratic process public opinion assumes a number of roles according to the need in question. So much so that it may well be a sanction (legitimising symbol), an instrument (data), and a generative force (directive and limit).

Within the confines of public opinion one can distinguish two categories of statements: (i) those of preference, which include expressions of individual feeling, conviction, and value; and (ii) those of fact, which purport to describe transpersonal reality in objective terms of verifiable evidence. Both are recognised as expressing controversial ideas, and hence are appropriate for discussion. It may well lead to agreement and the settlement of differences of opinion.

In a nutshell, public opinion to be truly worthy of the name, to be the proper motive force in a democracy, must be really public; and popular government is based upon the reception of a public opinion of that kind. In order for it to be public a majority is not enough, and unanimity is not required, but the opinion must be such that while the minority may not share it, they are bound by conviction, not by fear, to accept it; and if democracy is complete the submission must be given ungrudgingly.

19. An essential difference between government by public opinion as thus defined and by the bare will of a selfish majority is well expressed by President Hadley. After saying that laws imposed by a majority on a reluctant minority are commonly inoperative, he adds: “it cannot be too often repeated that those opinions which a man is prepared to maintain at another’s cost, but not of his own, count for little in forming the general sentiment of a community, or in producing any effective public movement”.

Not ignoring for a single moment the need for a sophisticated approach to the problems of the nature and functioning of public opinion, one would be inclined to lean towards praxis, namely, to state that a consensus, or compromise, is feasible; that in democracy, particularly during some historical events, there are highly influential movements which stagger the imagination. We live in such a period.

20. The issue has been comprehensively treated by Giovanni Sartori. “Elections are a means of achieving the goal which is ‘a government of opinions’, that is a government susceptible to public opinion and responsible to it....One might ask whether there exists a reason for using the word (public) opinion instead of some other notion. There is another question – in what sense can the given opinion be considered as public? Only at this moment can we judge whether an opinion spread publicly is free; and to what extent and in what sense. What is more, the concept ‘a government of opinions’ refers to the concept of a ‘government based on consent’...The choice of the term ‘opinion’ is very interesting. In its basic meaning an opinion is called public not only because it is spread among the public, but also because it refers to ‘public things’, to res publica...Public opinion is first and foremost a political concept. Opinion about public matters serves, and has to serve, the provision of information on public matters. In general terms, public opinion can be defined as follows: a community or a multitude of communities, whose scattered states of mind (opinions) enter into mutual interaction with the horde of information on the state of res publica. Naturally, the state of the mind, or opinion, contains various ingredients: needs, desires, preferences, attitudes, a general system of beliefs”.22

21. What follows is an attempt to illustrate the significance of a nexus which exists between public opinion and social movements. This topic seems to come within the purview of the Academy’s current inquiry, i.e. democracy itself.

The term “social movement” denotes a mass striving towards the realisation of social, economic or cultural goals which arises from some

idea (or a group of ideas). As a mass movement it has an organisational framework, leadership and a programme. It reflects aspirations of large sections of the society. It can represent the interests of a group or class, but it can just as well be concerned with problems of fundamental importance to the whole community (e.g. a nation).

22. I propose here to examine at some length the experience of Solidarity in Poland in 1980. Originally a trade union, it soon became a mass social movement fighting for freedom, the rule of law, and democracy, and against authoritarian, monocentric Communist rule, with the nation's independence as its ultimate goal.

Who would have imagined at that time that this event would have led to something that staggers the imagination, namely the “annus mirabilis” of 1989. The roots of this event lie very deep. They go back to the Yalta agreement of 1945 by which many countries of Central and Eastern Europe found themselves under the Communist yoke. Yet almost from the beginning the fight against Communism began. Most of the “captive” nations had always been part of Western civilisation in cultural and historical terms. The milestones of the long march towards freedom and democracy were: the Berlin upheaval of 1953, the Poznan workers’ strike of 1956, the Budapest uprising of the same year, the Prague Spring of 1968, the wave of strikes in Poland in 1970 and again in 1976, and then – what brought about the end of Communism – the foundation of Solidarity in 1980.

23. The strike of Polish workers started in August 1980 at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. The Communist regime, bearing in mind the bloodshed of the strikes of 1970 and aware of the economic collapse of the country, offered to negotiate. The result was the creation of the first labour organisation inside the Soviet bloc to challenge head on the Communists’ claim to represent the proletariat. In no time at all Solidarity embraced 10 million people in a country of 33 million. Rousseau’s maxim of volonté générale was thus evoked after two hundred years, but in a totally different form. What was most characteristic about the Solidarity revolution was its complete lack of violence. It was a historical contradiction in terms: a “peaceful revolution”. There were no Bastilles stormed, no guillotines erected, no panes of glass broken.
The phenomenon of non-violence was to be found later on in the history of all the democratic oppositions of East Central Europe throughout the 1980s, leading to the “\textit{annus mirabilis}”. Partly it was pragmatic: the other side had all the weapons. But it was also ethical. It was a statement about how things should be. It was not only a peaceful revolution but also a compromise revolution. It showed respect for the rule of law and even a degree of forgiveness for those who had abused power. It was in the tradition of Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

The main and leading grouping consisted of industrial workers, with a charismatic leader Lech Walensa at the helm. But practically all social strata were involved, a good example of this being the \textit{entente cordiale} between the workers and the intelligentsia. Inside Solidarity there were also many members of the Communist Party. The membership of this last was dwindling – from about 3 million to 2 million or so later on. Actually, this process had started earlier, in the late 1960s, coupled with the erosion of the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Solidarity, in fact, was born in a post-communist society.

The central agent in creating this condition was the Catholic Church. The situation in Poland was a result of the interplay of challenge and response (to use Toynbee’s phrase): the challenge posed by the Communist state and the response given by the Church. All the efforts of the state – equipped with the whole armoury of “rich means” – proved futile. The history of Poland suggests that national solidarity – a duty imposed and a right to be claimed – patriotism and religion, in combination, are more important influences than class conflict. The cultural experience of Poland has been penetrated deeply by the Christian vision of man – man who, to use the words of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła \textit{(Osoba i czyn – (Person and Deed) 1969)} “acts together with others”.

Timothy Garton Ash, one of the best analysts of the situation in this part of Europe, wrote: “If I were forced to name a single date for the “beginning of the end” of this inner history of Eastern Europe, it would be June 1979. The judgement may be thought excessively Polonocentric, but I do believe that the Pope’s first pilgrimage to Poland was the turning point...The Pope’s visit was followed, just over a year later, by
the birth of Solidarity and without the Pope’s visit it is doubtful that there would have been a Solidarity”.23

In December 1981, Solidarity announced a referendum which would be held in February 1982. People were to be asked one question: “Is the Communist Party able to represent the political interests of Polish society?” It was in direct response to this dagger, pointed at the very heart of the Communist system, that martial law was declared.

The “S” movement was crushed in the short term, but a new pattern of political behaviour prevailed. After seven years of the unsuccessful employment of counter-revolutionary force there took place the round table talks of early 1989, and the first (partly) free elections in June 1989. These were partially democratic for the Sejm (the Lower House) (due to the “contract” made with the ruling Communist Party) and fully democratic for the Senate. Solidarity candidates obtained about 80% of the vote. In the Senate, where the principle was that of the winner takes all, the “S” candidates gained 99% of the seats. There could hardly be a more convincing proof of public opinion being a motive force in the democratic process.

26. Some time during this period one basic notion for the functioning of democracy emerged in the region – that of civic society. Strangely enough, in the form of Solidarity this notion appeared and took shape spontaneously within the monocentric Communist system. People had had enough of being mere components in a deliberately atomised society. Almost innately, citizens’ committees came into being – one around Lech Walensa in 1987; local citizens’ committees which were responsible for the electoral campaign in 1989; and as a result of these very special elections, the Citizens’ Parliamentary Club. Such developments were accompanied by the Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia, the Civic Committee in Hungary, and Bürgerinitiativen in East Germany.

Perhaps the most remarkable fact was that the Communist Party accepted its defeat. By the same token it was also accepted by the Rus-

sians. For the other “captive” nations, a completely new pluralistic political constellation emerged from the Polish June elections. In these countries the changes proceeded by leaps and bounds. The Iron Curtain was being dismantled by the Hungarians, the East Germans, the Czechs and the Bulgarians, the only exception being Romania, which witnessed bloodshed. The Berlin Wall, a symbol of divided Europe, fell. The temporary epigram had it about right: “in the surge toward freedom, Poland took 10 years, Hungary 10 months, East Germany 10 days and Romania 10 hours”.24 If one adds to this the collapse of the Soviet Union, it had become evident that Communism in general was coming to its end. In the final analysis, the progress of freedom had triumphed over Marxism, with its legacy of war, revolution and totalitarian oppression.

27. The “annus mirabilis” of 1989 contributed to Europe as a whole – from the Atlantic to the Urals – becoming a democratic continent. The emergence of the pan-European democratic space may well have a bearing on the future course of events far beyond the confines of this continent. Democracy was born in Europe and democratic ideals are an essential part of what is called the European heritage. Never fully attained, often betrayed, less often practised than preached, these ideals are what goaded European man into greatness. They still constitute a foundation on which the further growth of European civilisation can be built.

II

1. We now turn to the second basic subject of this paper, namely the media – a plural form of the Latin medium, i.e. that by which something is done. In the social sciences the plural denomination has prevailed. This is rather justified if one takes into account the tremendous – and growing – number of instruments connected with mass com-

24 Time, winter 1996, ‘Europe. 50 Remarkable Years’.
munication. The term *media* denotes a mechanism of impersonal communication between the speaker and the audience. As a rule, it excludes face-to-face contact. Oddly enough, due to a sort of process of reduction, the usage *media* has prevailed. In other words, it is a means which has become an end in its own right.

When one speaks of the media, one has, in fact, in mind the media of mass communication. Let us not forget that since time immemorial they have been identified with speech. According to E. Sapir (*Communication*, 1931) “language is the most explicit type of communicative behavior that we know of. It need not here be defined beyond pointing out that it consists in every case known to us of an absolutely complete referential apparatus of phonetic symbols which have the property of locating every known social referent, including all the recognised data of perception which the society that it serves carries in tradition. Language is the most communicative process par excellence in every known society”.25 It retains its role, of course, in face-to-face contact.

2. However, in the era of the media the term “communication” has taken on a different character. It includes five fundamental factors: /a/ an initiator, /b/ a recipient, /c/ a mode or vehicle, /d/ a message, /e/ an effect. Thus in its most general form, *communication* denotes a process in which an initiator emits or sends a message via some vehicle to some recipient and produces an effect. Most definitions also include the idea of interaction in which the initiator is simultaneously or successively a recipient and the recipient simultaneously an initiator.

In most definitions the initiator is an organism, as is the recipient. In recent work in communication engineering the initiator or the recipient may also be a physical system other than an organism.26

As far as the notion “mass” is concerned, one has in mind a large audience. Mass communication, therefore, is equivalent to imparting information to, and influencing the ideas of, large numbers of people. Ours is indeed a mass society. With six billion people in the world today, this seems a legitimate affirmation.

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26 *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, p. 111.
Before moving to what is our main concern, i.e. the mass media, let me deal briefly with /i/ mass society and /ii/ mass culture. The first term denotes a society which is a *mass* and /or taken to be characterised in some respects by the *mass* or the *masses*. Such a society is characterised variously by features of increased mobility and social differentiation, and the loss of traditional roots, values, or attachments. Usage of the term is normative and political as well as analytic.\(^{27}\)

One would rather be inclined to put aside the pejorative use of the word *mass* which can be seen in the writings of J.O. Ortega y Gasset, K. Mannheim or R. Williams, and to stress what was written on the subject by, for instance, D. Bell,\(^{28}\) who mentions as a feature of mass culture “mechanised /and/ bureaucratised society”, or L. Wirth, who adds the dimension of democracy and complexity: “mass societies are the product of the division of labour, of mass communication and more or less democratically achieved consensus”.\(^{29}\)

Finally, a word about *mass culture*, which “denotes, broadly, the cultural correlates of mass society, especially characteristics of modern urban and industrial civilization...the implication being that the *masses* consume or enjoy *culture* which differs significantly from that enjoyed, either now or in the past, by *elite* elements in social structure; that such differences are differences both of content and quality; that *mass cultural* objects are transmitted and diffused through the modern *mass media of communication*”.\(^{30}\)

In fact, one of the most striking features of post-industrial civilisation is the mass character of phenomena and processes. It is first and foremost the result of a “demographic explosion”. There are mass communities, mass concentrations of people, mass needs and mass means of satisfying them. The mass satisfaction of needs is not only the result of the absolute increase in the population, but also of increasing social

\(^{27}\) *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, p. 413.

\(^{28}\) *The End of Ideology* (Glencoe Ill., 1969).


\(^{30}\) *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, p. 411.
and political democratisation, another important feature – at the end of the second millennium – of “the age of democracy”. Thanks to political processes all political strata have their say and play their part in the on-going events which occur, even those that were previously on the margins, so to speak, of social and economic life, that is to say, on the whole the most numerous groups. The constantly expanding system of social facilities provided by the state to the rich and even the poor is one expression of the truism that people are equal, that they do not differ in their needs, desires and aims, and in their rights in relation to the satisfaction of such elements.

3. What has been said so far can be considered as a sort of preparation of the ground for the issue under consideration, i.e. the mass media.

Let me proceed in a scholarly manner by presenting a brief definition of the subject under consideration. “Mass media (broadly defined in a way which does not specify the audience’s precise characteristics) are all the impersonal means of communication by which visual and/or auditory messages are transmitted directly to audiences. Included among the mass media are television, radio, motion pictures, newspapers, magazines, books and billboards. In must be kept in mind, however, that there are variations among mass media and that radio, motion pictures, television, and the popular press are likely to have larger and more heterogeneous audience.”

Two features are cited in definition, one relating to the technical means of transmission and the other to the audience. The first feature seems adequate in itself. The term denotes all mass media of communication in which a mechanism of impersonal reproduction intervenes between the speaker and the audience. With regard to the audience that receives communication, the range of the mass media is variously delineated. It is implied that a large audience is necessary for the proper usage of mass media. The mass media may (and in fact they do on many occasions) reach millions of people. The impact can be of unparalleled significance. (Let us recall two momentous events of the twenti-

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31 A Dictionary of the Social Sciences, pp. 412-413.
eth century: Winston Churchill’s radio broadcast to the British people on 4 June 1940, which contained the crucial words: “we shall never surrender”, and what John F. Kennedy said on TV in his inaugural address: “ask not what your country can do for you: ask what you can do for your country”).

4. What marks out this century, what defines it uniquely, is the exponential growth of the sciences. To say that sciences and the technologies they engender have changed the world is to state the obvious, although we often forget the true dimensions of the change. More subtly, the sciences have become a critical social force, fundamentally transforming the way we perceive the world, the nature of the questions we ask, and the expectations we have.

Electronic technologies characterised by instruments and circuits in which the flow is controlled and utilised, such as the transistor microchip or the electron tube, have become the forward thrust at the turn of the second and third millennia. This is to be seen in the new development they are catalysing; in the form of organisation they create; in the way they are taking control of older mechanised technologies (as in the case of automated factories); and in the modes of thought and way of life they engender.

The difference between mechanical and electronic media can be seen most sharply in the purposes the technologies serve. Three types of technological environment can be perceived: those relating to goods (production facilities, factories, etc); those relating to man (transportation, architecture, etc); and those that serve information (the communications media).

From this perspective it becomes apparent that the major impact of most mechanised technologies has been felt most critically in the area of goods and people. The steamship and the locomotive speeded up the movement of merchandise and increased its availability – spurring further industry and the growth of cities. The aeroplane and the automobile permitted new kinds of mobility for man, enabling him to move faster, and creating, in turn, new communities and relationships between distant places.
To some extent the new electronic technologies resemble the older steam-based technologies. But the crucial difference in electronic technologies – and particularly the media – is twofold: a drastic new form of energy and a different purpose within most of the technologies, namely, information movement and control.

Electricity is mobile energy. Unlike steam, wind, or waterpower, it can be carried along wires to any distance. And while it has replaced older sources of energy – as in the case of electrical trains – its most striking uses have not been merely as energy, but as the basis of new methods of communication and information control, such as the telegraph, the telephone, radio, television, and computers.

5. The distinction between a machine-dominated, or mechanistic interpretation of technology, and an information-control interpretation leads to major new considerations. The most important of these is the way in which one conceives technology in relation to man.

The rationalists of the eighteenth century used a machine as a model by which they attempted to understand the universe and man: the whole of nature was seen as a mighty clockwork. In the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries the machine was sometimes interpreted as a principle of its own opposed to man – degrading and dehumanising him. Charles Chaplin’s *Modern Times* (1934) depicts a helpless worker on an assembly line.

Briefly, mechanical and electronic technologies can be characterised as follows: from interchangeable parts to integrated circuits, from the consumption of natural energy sources to new routes for tapping and channelling energies, from the bit-by-bit method of mechanisation to the all-at-once method of electronic energy. In short, electronic instruments are not machines, and the electronic age is not the machine age.

H. A. Innis in his *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto, 1951) emphasised how the media of mass communication transform the monopolies of knowledge and in the final analysis become a power within a culture. The media shape and influence information and ultimately culture (in the broadest sense of the word) – democracy as a political system being an inseparable part of it. He discerned in radio, film, and
television a return to oral media, something that could mean vitality in culture along the lines of the Greeks who successfully merged an oral tradition with a written alphabet. An oral tradition is interpersonal rather than impersonal. What is most important, however, is the contact that the oral tradition has with the organic. If the oral bias is completely lost, man becomes totally dependent on media which are external external to him. “Media”, he concluded, “can liberate or confine man; just knowing that may one day make the difference”.

His follower, M. McLuhan, in Understanding Media (1964), explored the mental and social repercussions of the electronic media. His study is structured on the premise that television represents for his (and, if I may be personal, also for my) age and for the near future roughly what the printing press represented for the previous four hundred years. The phrases “before television” and “after television” run like two motifs through the pages of his work. According to McLuhan we do not watch television; we reach out and touch it. He sees television as the apex and apotheosis of the electronic revolution. In many contexts, the terms television and electronic media have become inseparable.32

6. Let us turn now to the areas of media which are valid to the central issue – that is, democracy. We begin with the notion of the common good (social interest) in the media. They are both products and a reflection of the history of the society. Despite similarities between societies, in terms of their origins, practice and conventions, the media are national institutions and are subject to political pressure and the social expectations of the public. They reflect, express, and often

32 In presenting the above I have drawn on the inspiring work by W. Kuhns, The Post-industrial Prophets. Interpretations of Technology (New York, 1971). Significantly, on the jacket of his book one can read the names of Lewis Mumford, Siegfried Giedion, Jacques Ellul, Harold A. Innis, Marshall McLuhan, Norbert Wiener, R. Buckminster Fuller. I wonder if one could add two more authors who may well be considered “prophets”: Raymond Aron and his Progress and Disillusion. The Dialectics of Modern Society (New York, 1968), and Zbigniew Brzezinski, La Révolution Technétronique (Paris, 1971), a translation of his original publication Between Two Ages (New York, 1970). With regard to the French edition, it seems that it was there that the term “technétronique” (a combination of two crucial denominations, i.e. techné and electronics) first appeared.
actively serve, national interests in the form defined by other, more influential forces.

The media can be subject to extensive forms of legal and administrative control, protection or regulations of an often normative nature. Since the media can be very different, the medial system is not ruled by one clear set of norms, and the practices can differ as well.

The normative regulation of the media is based on the premise that they should serve the common good (social interest). In practice, this means that they are not seen as commercial companies like others of that kind because they ought to contribute to long-term social benefits, mainly in the cultural and political area. This aspect of their activity is approved of by the media when they proclaim their public mission, expecting legal and economic privileges in return.

Without resorting to the common good one cannot evaluate the activities of the media. The problem lies in the transition from the general notion of social interest to its interpretation in terms of the realities of particular media: it differs depending on whether one is dealing with telecommunications or public radio and television. For example, according to the Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) report (1991), a telephone service should include: (1) general geographical availability; (2) general economic affordability; (3) general service of high quality; and (4) non-discriminatory tariffs. The first two elements – availability and affordability – are the most important, yet while one can easily imagine their realisation in telecommunication, it becomes much more difficult in the case of the crowded computer network (WWW – or the World Wide Web – is sometimes jokingly read out as World Wait Web, and with good reason). At this juncture McQuail\(^3\) presents an idea of public service which would include: (1) general service; (2) variability; (3) editorial independence; (4) social responsibility and accountability; (5) cultural quality and identity; and (6) public financing and /or non-profitable activities.

The functioning of the mass media is also evaluated in terms of the social values and principles which constitute a check on their trustworthiness. It is not easy to interpret them since one runs the risk of creating an illusion of an existing coherent, legally approved and scientific code of principles on the functioning of the media. But no such code exists – and if it did, it would contradict the principle of freedom of expression. Still, there do exist some socially approved principles and standards which allow us to differentiate between good and bad media. Commonly, they are as follows: social order and solidarity, cultural order and freedom, equality, variability and a high level of information.

The authorities and society expect public communication to uphold the existing social order. There are numerous visions of this order in democracy, but generally the media are expected to condemn conflict and violence, and to act in ways that strengthen the democratic state (e.g., acting for the good of the recipients, contributing to social integration, maintaining the prestige of the forces of law and order, observing the accepted moral standards of a given society, etc). As for social expectations regarding the quality of medial products, they should: (1) reflect the culture and language of the people they serve according to the latter’s life experience; (2) perform an educational role and express all that is best in the cultural achievement of the nation; and (3) support originality and cultural creativity.34

In recent years the media have strengthened features which society deems inappropriate or even negative. This has led governments and international bodies, e.g. the Council of Europe, to introduce new legal regulations. These concern media monopolies that threaten the variability and independence of information and opinion, the development of scandalising and sensational forms of media, the growth of supra-national media that invade the cultural identity of other societies, aggression in the media which contributes to teenage violence, etc.

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Freedom of the media lies at the heart of liberal doctrine and is formulated in all democratic constitutions. Yet its interpretation differs. Legally guaranteed and socially recognised, freedom of communication has a twofold dimension: it exists to ensure a wide range of social voices and to meet various social needs. Freedom of the media is advantageous for the functioning of social institutions since it guarantees the flow of reliable information and the presentation of various points of view. The media must not fear the rich and powerful, and should engage in controversial political debate. The media’s right to be independent means the right to inform people about the emperor’s clothes. Yet, freedom is a condition rather than a criterion of the functioning of the media. It is related to the right to free expression, but this requires the access of citizens to the media and the possibility of gaining different information from different public sources.

Another basic issue of the liberal doctrine on the media is the belief in the separation of information from commentary. The main task is objective reporting, with the recipient free to formulate judgements and to interpret. However, objectivity need not always be valuable, is not always achievable, and is not always necessary.

The variability of the media is the fundamental standard of the democratic media system since it upholds the normal cycle of change in society (change of the ruling elites, circulation of power, the balancing of influences). The more equal the system, the more diversified it is.

Yet another major aspect is the social responsibility of the media. According to McQuail, the media should be true, precise, just, objective, and relevant; constitute a public forum for various ideas; be free and self-regulating; and should observe established ethical codes and professional standards.

7. At the end of the second millennium of the Christian era, societies everywhere around the world are being fundamentally changed by the emergence of a new paradigm based on information and communication technologies (ICT). Side by side with the microelectronics-based

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information technologies (microprocessors, computers, telecommunications, optoelectronics), we encounter genetic engineering, which extends the manipulation of information codes to the realm of living matter, thus ushering in a fundamental biological revolution.

At the same time, a new communication system of a revolutionary character with important consequences for man has emerged. This is the Internet, which is on the way to becoming an essential communications channel which will characterise the world during the twenty-first century. The speed of its diffusion is enormous. In late 1998 Internet users numbered 130m in the world. Even more important is the growth rate, estimated at about 100 per cent per year, reaching 500m users in the early years of the twenty-first century.

The most important implication of this new instrument is that it cannot be controlled, technically or politically, except by disconnecting a communication system from the global network. Furthermore, by linking up people with each other, the Internet bypasses the communication system established by the mass media. While the media are themselves fully present in the Internet, people can opt for their communication or for selected alternative sources of information and interaction, thus escaping their dependence on the mass media.

A large share of Internet usage seems to happen in work situations (either in the office or at the home work-desk), and reflects the professional and personal interests of the users. Networks developed for specific purposes, and even chat groups, are constructed around affinities, shared values, and common interests.

Electronic communities emerge from existing social communities, but they expand them, reinforce them, and ultimately may spur electronic communities that take on a life of their own. One can say that sociability in the Internet is both weak and strong, depending on the people and the contents of the relationship, and it is linked to non-electronic communications of various levels of intensity.

What is most important – in view of the basic theme of our consideration, i.e. democracy – is that social and political mobilisation through the Internet is related to grass-roots organisation and to the exercise of
political democracy. Internet communication may in fact prove to be invaluable for the reconstruction of civic society in a world threatened by growing inequalities and political alienation as a consequence of the capture of powerful ICTs by those who still control society. According to Castells, the crux of the matter is the emergence of a historically new network society. In addition to the term information society, Castells introduces the notion of informational society to emphasise that modern society bases itself on information, knowledge and technology as a means of producing and shaping the conditions of collective life. As a new form, this society is in statu nascendi.

And yet, despite all the mind-boggling advantages of the Internet, there remains the disturbing thought that what it lacks is that element which is of most importance for the human condition, namely, face-to-face interaction.

8. Let me end the argument with a very brief and fragmentary presentation of the doctrine on the media of the Catholic Church. In particular since the mid-twentieth century, the Church has fully recognised the importance and meaning of the media and has developed its own doctrine: “In the media the Church finds a modern pulpit, through the media she can address the masses” (Evangeli Nuntiandi n. 45). In his manifesto on the World Mass Media Day (21.01.1986) John Paul II wrote: “The basic task of the Church is proclamation of the Scriptures...Also, today the Church wishes to submit the abundant reality of the social mass media to the fundamental values aimed at defending the dignity of man...The Church expresses her joy at the existence of those means and the possibility of sharing the light of the Scriptures with all men...The Church would be guilty to the Lord if she failed to employ such powerful aid constantly perfected by the human mind”.

Following Vatican Council II (1965) and its main document on the media, Inter Mirifica, the Church’s teaching on the media was brought

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into being. The Church believes that man has the right to express and spread his opinions (John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, n. 12 [1963]), but does not consider this right to be unlimited. It is constrained by the duty to diffuse true information and by the principles of the moral order. It is the responsibility of state authorities to ensure that the mass media are employed for the common good. The authorities should defend and protect the real and just freedom of information (*Inter Mirifica*, n. 12). John Paul II told the journalists that: “Thus, the specificity of the Christian’s calling to shape reality by means of the mass media is the calling to bear witness to faith through the service to truth...This does not mean a truth as a description of reality true in terms of the factual state, but a description of the complete reality of man in the perspective of the law revealed by God...This is of particular importance in the case of creators and workers within the mass media whose testimony to truth is connected with immense responsibility...Thus each of them “must be the man of truth”. The attitude each of them takes towards truth ultimately defines his identity, and his professional value as well.

*Aetatis Novae*, a ministerial instruction on mass communication issued to mark the twentieth anniversary of *Communio et Progressio*, stresses that “the Church’s commitment in the area of the mass media” is an activity which aims at the improvement of the media. The instruction does not suggest that the media should spread pornography or godlessness and does not propose limits on freedom, neither does it suggest organising the pressure of Catholic opinion to forbid the publication of magazines or programmes. The instruction speaks of the Christians’ right to a “dialogue and information within the Church”.

It is abundantly clear that His Holiness attaches great importance to the functioning and role of the media. His service expresses this to the utmost. The window from which each week at the Angelus he proclaims the entrance of God into history is a window of the world. St. Peter’s Square, where all nations, races and languages meet, is a *lectiorium* of the world.
List of Literature

I. Public Opinion


II. Media


Bell Daniel (1964): *The End of Ideology* (Glencoe, Ill.).


SUMMARY

The academic debate addresses the relationship between democracy and economic activity primarily from the point of view of the interaction between the social and the economic constitution. In the eyes of the ordoliberal school, and of the regulatory concept of the ‘social market economy’, which is based on its ideas, democracy and the free-market economy belong logically together. Political democracy and economic efficiency (in the sense of welfare improvement and employment) are not contradictions; instead, the economic basic rights of freedom of consumption and freedom of economic activity are key components of the democratic system. In practice, however, increasing tensions have emerged in some Western-type democracies in recent years between the seemingly limited capacity of political democracy to carry out reforms and the pronounced adjustment pressures associated above all with the advance of the globalisation process. In public choice literature, which has a strong US bias, the interdependence of democracy and economic activity tends to be viewed with scepticism. Some representatives of institutional economics doubt whether decision-making rules based on theoretical ideas of democracy are useful and appropriate in economic terms. In their estimation, more democracy is often detrimental to economic efficiency. Hence protective and defence mechanisms and matching political rules and institutional arrangements are called for in order to curb the tendency towards short-termism, towards undue emphasis on minority interests and towards freedom- and prosperity-limiting regulations. The empirical connection between democracy and economic growth is at the forefront of more recent growth-theory research. Most findings suggest that there is a significant correlation between democracy and economic results. However, the economic literature does not provide a satisfactory answer to the question of the optimum relationship between democracy and economic activity. The concrete relationship between democracy and economic activity is determined by the given historical experience and the values prevailing, by the state of economic and political development, and not least by the personalities of those who bear political responsibility. Especially in a democracy, however, political leadership calls for an ethical orientation that takes due account of the laws of economics.

In dieser Ausarbeitung können diese Fragestellungen nur teilweise behandelt werden, wobei die Auswahl insbesondere von grundsätzlichen Überlegungen zur Wirtschaftspolitik bestimmt wurde.

I. Neue Aktualität in der politischen Praxis

Für die politische Praxis hat das Thema im letzten Jahrzehnt offenkundig eine neue Aktualität gewonnen. Dabei spielen insbesondere folgende Vorgänge und Faktoren eine Rolle.


2. Gleichzeitig stellt sich zunehmend die Frage, ob und in welcher Weise auf der internationalen oder gar supranationalen Ebene ein gemeinsames Regelwerk für nationale Grenzen überschreitende Wirtschaftsaktivitäten notwendig ist. Wenngleich z. B. über die Rolle des Staates in der Wirtschaft sowohl in den Industrieländern als auch in den verschiedenen Schwellen- und Entwicklungsländern nach wie vor erhebliche Auffassungsunterschiede bestehen, so hat sich andererseits doch im Laufe der Jahre ein gewisser Konsens darüber entwickelt, daß große Teile der Märkte für ihre Funktionsfähigkeit ein Mindestmaß an gemeinsamen oder vergleichbaren Rechtsgrundlagen sowie Ordnungs-


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II. Kurze Erläuterung der Begriffe

Im folgenden sollen einige grundsätzliche Fragen hinsichtlich des Zusammenhangs zwischen demokratischer Staatsordnung und freiheitlicher Wirtschaftsordnung sowie das Verhältnis von politischer Demokratie und dauerhafter wirtschaftlicher Effizienz behandelt werden. Den Ausgangspunkt dafür soll jedoch zunächst eine kurze Erläuterung der hier benutzten Begriffe Demokratie und Wirtschaft bilden.


Demokratie im Sinne der politischen Organisation der Staaten meint vor allem die Herrschaft des Volkes auf der Grundlage von Mehrheitsentscheidungen innerhalb einer verfassungsrechtlich gesicherten rechtsstaatlichen Ordnung, die zugleich möglichst weitgehend persönliche Freiheit und rechtliche Gleichheit sichert. Dabei gibt es grundsätzlich zwei Anwendungsarten des demokratischen Prinzips: Entweder ent-

scheidet das Volk selbst weitgehend die politischen Sachfragen (sog. plebiszitäre Demokratie) oder es entscheidet in Wahlen darüber, wer regieren soll (sog. repräsentative Demokratie). Die Praxis kennt natürlich viele Zwischenformen, wobei insbesondere die Partizipation an den politischen Entscheidungen über die Mitwirkung in den für die parlamentarische Mehrheitsbildung wichtigen Parteien, aber auch Gespräche und regelmäßige Kontakte der Abgeordneten mit ihren Wählern oft eine erhebliche Rolle spielen.


Auch der Begriff “Wirtschaft” ist nicht so eindeutig, wie er auf den ersten Blick erscheint. Das gilt insbesondere für die Abgrenzung des Bereichs Wirtschaft; es gilt aber in gewisser Weise auch für die Definition ihrer Zielsetzung.

Ausgangspunkt wirtschaftlicher Tätigkeit ist zwar stets die Knappheit von Gütern und Leistungen, gemessen an den Bedürfnissen der Menschen. Diese wirtschaftliche Knappheit soll durch (Mehr-) Produktion von Gütern und Leistungen sowie deren nachfrageorientierte Verwendung möglichst effizient reduziert bzw. überwunden werden. Insofern kann der Begriff Wirtschaft letztlich alle Tätigkeitsbereiche umfassen, die sich mit der Befriedigung von menschlichen und auch gesellschaftlichen Bedürfnissen materieller und auch immaterieller Natur befassen. Das Kriterium der Ef-
fizienz ist dabei jedoch stets von besonderer Bedeutung. Eine genaue Ab- 
grenzung des Generalbegriffes Wirtschaft gegenüber anderen menschli-
chen Tätigkeitsbereichen ist allerdings kaum möglich.

In der arbeitsteiligen Welt von heute und morgen ist jedoch die 
Form des Mit-einanders der am Wirtschaftsprozeß Beteiligten, also das 
geltende oder zumindest vorherrschende Wirtschaftssystem sowohl im 
Hinblick auf das demokratische Freiheitspostulat als auch für die nach-
haltige Effizienz der Wirtschaft von zentraler Bedeutung. Die in der 
heutigen Welt vorzufindenden Wirtschaftssysteme unterscheiden sich 
zwar alle deutlich von den beiden idealtypischen Extremformen der 
absolut freien Marktwirtschaft und der im vollen Umfange zentralgeleiteten Wirtschaft. Spätestens seit Beginn der 80er Jahre ist je-
doch weltweit ein mehr oder minder starker Trend in Richtung Markt-
wirtschaft erkennbar. Neben dem Vordringen der Demokratie und der 
verstärkten Öffnung der Grenzen spielen dabei offenkundig auch Ver-
änderungen im Wirtschaftsprozeß selbst sowie die damit verbundenen 
Effizienzerfahrungen eine entscheidende Rolle.

III. Das Verhältnis von Demokratie und Wirtschaft sowie seine Bedeu-
tung für die Effizienz des Systems

Das Verhältnis von Demokratie und Wirtschaft betrifft vor allem 
die Systemfrage, und zwar sowohl das innerhalb des jeweiligen Bereichs 
geltende System als auch das Miteinander und die wechselseitige Be-
einflussung beider Systeme.

Orientierungsmaßstäbe für die Bewertung des Gesamtsystems mü-
ssen dabei einerseits die nachhaltige Realisierung demokratischer Grund-
werte wie personale Freiheit, rechtliche Gleichheit und menschliche 
Solidarität sowie andererseits die Sicherung und Förderung der für die 
Wohlfahrt des Einzelnen und der Gesellschaft dauerhaft erforderlichen 
ökonomischen Effizienz sein.

Aus wirtschaftlicher Sicht steht damit im Mittelpunkt des Themas 
die Frage nach dem geeigneten Koordinationsprinzip für die Wirtschaft 
selbst sowie die Abgrenzung zum politischen/staatlichen Bereich und
insbesondere auch die Art der Wahrnehmung der dort anfallenden, die Wirtschaft betreffenden Aufgaben.


Von besonderer Bedeutung für die nachhaltige Funktionsfähigkeit des marktwirtschaftlichen Systems ist die Verläßlichkeit und Kalkulierbarkeit der sog. staatlichen Rahmenbedingungen. Das gilt im besonderen Maße für das wirtschaftsrelevante Recht; es gilt aber auch für die sonstigen staatlichen Interventionen, von der Gestaltung der öffentlichen Budgets bis hin zu den wirtschaftlichen Eigenaktivitäten des Staates und den von ihm gesteuerten oder beeinflußten Institutionen. Unvorhersehbare Veränderungen und ständige ad-hoc-Interventionen des Staates bzw. der öffentlichen Hand können die Effizienz des marktwirtschaftlichen Koordinierungsprozesses außerordentlich schwächen. Die ohnehin am Markt vorhandenen „natürlichen“ Unsicherheiten hinsichtlich des Verhaltens der Wettbewerber auf der Angebots- und Nachfrageseite, der Entwicklung der Finanzierungsbedingungen usw. kön-
nen nämlich durch unvorhergesehen staatliche Aktivitäten erheblich vergrößert werden. Übermäßige Unsicherheiten können die wirtschaftliche Effizienz jedoch stark belasten. Sie erschweren insbesondere längerfristig orientierte Investitionen, die für die Entwicklung des künftigen Produktionspotentials und damit auch für die Entwicklung von Wachstum und Beschäftigung von großer Bedeutung sind.


\[\text{Die nachfolgenden Darlegungen sind insbesondere bezogen auf kontinental-europäische Erfahrungen in einigen größeren Ländern.}\]
erforderlich machen, bei denen sich erfahrungs-gemäß politische Demokratien besonders schwer tun. Insbesondere dann, wenn durch frühere Entscheidungen geförderte oder geschützte Besitzstände für einzelne Gruppen entstanden sind, erweisen sich oft Korrekturen und erst recht grundlegenden Reformen nur schwer als durchsetzbar.


IV. Das Verhältnis von Demokratie und Wirtschaft in der wirtschaftswissenschaftlichen Diskussion

In der wirtschaftswissenschaftlichen Diskussion wird das Verhältnis zwischen Demokratie und Wirtschaft schon seit langem mit unterschiedlichen Ansätzen und Bewertungsmethoden behandelt.

Nachstehend sollen drei unterschiedliche Ansätze und Thesen kurz dargestellt werden:

1. Die ordoliberale Interdependenzthese

Insbesondere die sogenannte ordoliberale Schule, die nach dem 2. Weltkrieg vor allem die deutsche wirtschaftspolitische Praxis unter Ludwig Erhard sowie das von ihm vertretene Ordnungskonzept der “Sozialen Marktwirtschaft” beeinflußt hat, betonte stets die These von der prinzipiellen Interdependenz der Teilordnungen für das freiheitli-


Diese unterschiedliche Gewichtung ist ja wohl auch der Grund dafür, daß klassische Liberale wie von Hayeck, Friedman oder Buchanan Protagonisten der Marktwirtschaft als freier Unternehmerwirtschaft sind, zugleich aber der parlamentarischen Demokratie in vielerlei Hinsicht kritisch oder skeptisch gegenüberstehen. Die in Deutschland entwik-

3 Ludwig Erhard, Wohlstand für alle, Düsseldorf-Berlin 1957, Seite 14
2. Tendenziell skeptische Positionen in der amerikanischen politischen Ökonomiewissenschaft


In der amerikanischen Public-Choice-Literatur und der neuen In- institutionenökonomik ist die Skepsis vor allem im Hinblick auf die öko- nomische Effizienz demokratischer politischer Entscheidungen eher noch größer. Vor allem James M. Buchanan, Gordon Tullock, aber


3. Einige Ergebnisse aus dem Bereich der neueren Wachstumsfor- schung

In der neuen wachstumstheoretischen Forschung gibt es eine Reihe von Studien, die sich – meist gestützt auf ökonometrische Methoden – insbesondere mit der empirischen Frage nach dem Zusammenhang zwischen der Demokratie und dem ökonomischen Wachstum aufgrund verschiedener länderebezogener Analysen befassen. Zwar kranken fast alle diese Analysen an der jeweils begrenzten Aussagekraft der zugrunde liegenden ökonomischen und politischen Daten – was insbesondere ihre Vergleichbarkeit beeinträchtigt –, doch dürfen ihre Ergebnisse nicht unterschätzt werden.

Schon zu Beginn der 80er Jahre hatte Erich Weede vom Forschungs- institute für Soziologie der Universität Köln sich in einer mehreren Ländergruppen umfassenden vergleichenden Analyse von Daten der Weltbank mit dem Einfluß der Demokratie auf das Wirtschaftswachstum befaßt. Die Konklusion seiner Analyse hat er damals wie folgt zusammengefaßt: „If there is an incompatibility of goals, it is not between democracy and economic growth, äs has so often been suggested in the literature. Instead, there might be a higher-order trade-off. If we want
to avoid the incompatibility of democracy and economic growth, we should rather limit government interference or (mis)management of the economy.”

In den 90er Jahren hat Robert J. Barro (Harvard University) in einer vergleichenden Analyse die verschiedenen bis dahin in der Ökonomiewissenschaft vertretenen Thesen zum Thema Demokratie und Wirtschaft erneut aufgegriffen und sie durch eine eigene ökonometrische Analysen insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Frage ergänzt, ob für die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der Entwicklungsländer ein Export demokratischer Institutionen aus den entwickelten westlichen Industrieländern in diese Länder wünschenswert sei. Sein Ergebnis am Schluß der Studie faßt er wie folgt zusammen:” The first lesson is that more democracy is not the key to economic growth, also it may have a weak positive effect for countries that start with few political rights. The second message is that political freedom tend to erode over time if they get out of line with country’s standard of living. The more general conclusion is that the advanced western countries would contribute more to the welfare of poor nations by exporting their economic Systems, notably property rights and free markets, rather then their political Systems, which typically developed after reasonable Standards of living had been attend.” Er bestätigt damit zumindest teilweise die schon 1959 von Saymour Martin Lipset, entwickelte Hypothese, daß wirtschaftliche Prosperität die Demokratie fördert, während der umgekehrte Kausalzusammenhang zumindest umstritten ist.

Politikwissenschaftler scheinen hier jedoch bisweilen positivere Positionen zu vertreten als die meisten Ökonomen. So kommt Donald Wittman (University of California) in seiner Untersuchung “Why democracies produce the efficient re-sults” zu der Wahrscheinlichkeits-

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prognose “democratic governments will allocate to the economic markets those task in which the economic market is most efficient.”11 Und den Ökonomen wirft er vor, zwar die Fehler der political markets hervorzuheben, die Irrtümer oder gelegentlichen pathologischen Verhaltensweisen an den ökonomischen Märkten jedoch nicht kritisch genug zu sehen.

In jüngster Zeit hat J. Benson Durham (Columbia University) sich – ausgehend von der Frage: Do dictatorships or democracies better promote economic growth? – 12 in einer empirischen Studie auf der Grundlage von Daten für 105 Länder, eingehend mit dem generellen Thema “Economic Growth and Political Regimes” befaßt. Die Ergebnisse zeigen dabei ein sehr differenziertes Bild, das kaum honhsute Schlüssefolgerungen zuläßt. In der Gesamtstudie zeigt sich nämlich kaum eine Korrelation zwischen den unterschiedlichen politischen Regimen einerseits sowie dem Wirtschaftswachstum und den Investitionen andererseits. “But considering develop-ments levels, some evidence indicates that discretion decreases growth in advanced areas, and, contrary to theory, inhibits investment in poorer countries. Also, single party dictatorships have higher investment issues but do not grow faster than party-less regimes.” So unterschiedlich die Forschungsansätze und Methoden im einzelnen auch sind, und so fragwürdig das statistische Datenbild insbesondere in diktatorischen Regimen auch sein mag13, so deuten doch die meisten Ergebnisse darauf hin, daß es zwar mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit einen Zusammenhang zwischen Demokratie und wirtschaftlichen Ergebnissen gibt. Dieser Zusammenhang ist aber alles andere als eindeutig. Sowohl die Richtung als auch

11 Donald Wittmann, Why democracy produce efficient results in: Journal of Political Econo-
my, 1989, Vol. 97, no6, p. 1421
12 J. Benson Durham, Economic Growth and Political Regimes, in: Journal of Economic Growth 4, 1999, Boston, pp. 82-111
13 Die Verhandlungen über die Deutsche Wiedervereinigung, an denen der Verfasser dieses Papiers unmittelbar beteiligt war, haben beispielsweise gezeigt, wie wenig aussagekräftig und zutreffend die Statistiken in dem lange kommunistisch beherrschten Ostdeutschland waren. Insbesondere die ökonomischen Statistikdaten waren nahezu alle deutlich, zum Teil sogar extrem überhöht.
die Intensität des Zusammenhangs ist jedoch in vielen Fällen sehr unterschiedlich. Ein positiver Zusammenhang hängt offenkundig wesentlich vor allem davon ab, wieviel Freiraum die Politik der Wirtschaft läßt, welchen Rechtsrahmen die Demokratie für die Wirtschaft schafft, wie stabil und dauerhaft das jeweilige demokratische Regime ist und wie transparent es seine Kompetenzen gegenüber der Wirtschaft wahrmimmt. Je mehr der demokratische Staat sich auf die Sicherung der Rechtstaatlichkeit, die Abwehr von wettbewerbsbehindernden Kräften sowie die Sicherung von rechtlichen und sozialen Rahmenbedingungen beschränkt, um so besser sind tendenziell die gesamtwirtschaftlichen Ergebnisse. Darüber hinaus spielt offensichtlich auch der unterschiedliche wirtschaftliche und politische Entwicklungsstand der Länder für die wechselseitige Beeinflussung eine wichtige Rolle. Die Entwicklungsländer benötigen für die Entwicklung ihrer Wirtschaften in besonderem Maße einen möglichst stabilen rechtsstaatlichen Rahmen.

V. **Einige Schlussfolgerungen**


Dennoch soll abschließend versucht werden, einige zusammenfassende Bewertungen vorzunehmen und einige Schlussfolgerungen zu ziehen, die insbesondere auch auf persönlichen Erfahrungen beruhen:

1. Das vor allem auf den Grundwerten der Freiheit und Gleichheit beruhende System der politischen Demokratie findet seine natürliche Entsprechung in einem Wirtschaftssystem, das auf möglichst weitgehende individuelle Freiheit im Sinne der freien wirtschaftlichen Be-
tätigung und der Konsumfreiheit für alle aufbaut. Zwischen der Demokratie und der auf Freiheit und Wettbewerb basierenden Marktwirtschaft besteht damit eine weitgehende Interdependenz, ja teilweise sogar Kongruenz.

Beide Bereiche brauchen jedoch eine rechtsstaatliche Rahmenordnung, die grundsätzlich alle Betroffenen gleich behandelt und die vor allem in ihrem Kernbereich auch dauerhaft wirksam sein muß. Für den Bereich der Wirtschaft muß diese Rahmenordnung einerseits die Mindestvorschriften für die Erhaltung des marktwirtschaftlichen Systems und seiner Effizienz festlegen, andererseits muß sie vor allem im Hinblick auf das Gleichheitspostulat auch soziale Mindestregeln und Schutzvorschriften festlegen, die jedoch die Effizienz des Wirtschaftssystems auf Dauer nicht gefährden dürfen.


2. Diese positive Interdependenz bzw. Kongruenz und Ergänzung kann sich jedoch zu einer Antagonie entwickeln, wenn das demokrati-
sche Politiksystem sich nicht in der Lage erweist, eine klare Rechtsordnung mit den notwendigen Freiheitsräumen zu schaffen und sie dauerhaft zu sichern. Für die Dynamik und Effizienz der Wirtschaft ist kaum etwas gefährlicher als permanente Unsicherheit hinsichtlich den rechtlichen und politischen Rahmenbedingungen. Das marktwirtschaftliche System braucht für seine Funktionsfähigkeit sowie die damit zu erzielende wirtschaftliche Effizienz bei der Bedürfnisbefriedigung eine politische und staatliche Ordnung, die einerseits eine klare Rahmenordnung für die Wirtschaft setzt und für ihre tatsächliche Anwendung sorgt (sog. starker Staat), die aber andererseits auch dem Markteschehen genügend Freiraum gibt und staatliche Interventionen auf ihre nachhaltige Ordnungskonformität begrenzt (sog. sich selbst limitierender Staat).


3. Die politischen Demokratiesysteme in den sog. entwickelten Industrieländern haben zwar zumeist relativ stabile, sowohl verfassungsmäßig als auch durch entsprechende Staatspraxis abgesicherte politische und rechtliche Rahmenordnungen für die Wirtschaft in ihren Staatsgebieten. Auch die Wirtschaft dieser Länder ist jedoch vielfach besonders mit zwei Herausforderungen konfrontiert:

Einerseits trifft sie mit ihrer wachsenden Aktivität außerhalb des eigenen Landes zunehmend auf verschiedenartige Rechts- und Politiksysteme, die zwar oft die wirtschaftliche Alltagspraxis erschweren, aber nicht selten auch neue Möglichkeiten zur (Aus)Nutzung dieser


Gerade in diesen Ländern braucht die Wirtschaft im besonderen Maße stabile und dauerhaft wettbewerbsorientierte rechtliche und politische Rahmenbedingungen, um die für den wirtschaftlichen Aufholprozeß notwendige Dynamik entfalten zu können. Das ist besonders wichtig für Auslandsinvestitionen, auf die diese Länder so sehr angewiesen sind. Die politischen Demokratiesysteme haben in diesen Ländern jedoch häufig noch keine etablierten Traditionen und sind nicht selten im besonderen Maße instabil.


5. Insgesamt ist eine allgemein gültige Antwort auf die Frage nach dem optimalen Verhältnis zwischen Demokratie und Wirtschaft wohl nicht möglich. Die Antwort dürfte vor allem abhängen von den jewei-


Umgekehrt ist allerdings für die Demokratie in Anbetracht der grundsätzlichen Unteilbarkeit der Freiheit und Gleichheit sowie der notwendigen wirtschaftlichen Effizienz im Sinne einer nachhaltigen Wohl-fahrtssteigung und eines hohen Beschäftigungsstandes auch keine Alternative zum freiherrlichen marktwirtschaftlichen System mit einer politisch und rechtlich gesicherten Rahmenordnung erkennbar und sinnvoll. Das gilt insbesondere auch in der zunehmend global orientierten Wirtschaftswelt. Die Gefahr eines einseitigen Diktates des Marktes kann durch eine ordnungskonforme Gestaltung der politischen und rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen sowie durch Interventionen des Staates und mehr Transparenz über voraussehbare Entwicklungen begrenzt werden. Diese Aktivitäten müs-
sen jedoch so gestaltet werden, daß sie nicht das Anreizsystem des Marktes gefährden. Wilhelm Röpke hat die wirtschaftspolitische Aufgabe des Staates und der Staaten im marktwirtschaftlichen System einmal so formuliert: “Der Staat muß den Kapitalismus gegen die Kapitalisten verteidigen und sie daran hindern, sich einen bequemen Weg als den durch das Leistungsprinzip vorgezeichneten zur Rentabilität zu bahnen und ihre Verluste auf die Allgemeinheit abzuwälzen.”\textsuperscript{14} Der Staat kann hierbei nur erfolgreich sein, wenn er für eine entsprechende Gestaltung der Rahmenbedingungen für das marktwirtschaftliche Geschehen sorgt.

Darüber hinaus ist auch in der Marktwirtschaft eine überproportionale Belastung der Schwachen keine unvermeidliche Konsequenz. Ein nachhaltig die wirtschaftliche Effizienz förderndes marktwirtschaftliche System bietet vielmehr die besten Voraussetzungen dafür, daß alle Leistungsfähigen und – willigen in geeigneter Weise am wachsenden Wohlstand und am Wirtschaftsprozeß teilhaben können. Ein die ökonomischen Gesetze beachtendes ergänzendes Sozial- und Solidarsystem ist durchaus kein Widerspruch zur freien Wirtschaftsordnung, wohl aber eine ständige Herausforderung an die Politikgestalter, die es den sich verändernden Bedingungen rechtzeitig anpassen müssen. Auch die Demokratie muß hinreichend innovationsfähig sein.

\textit{Literature Liste}


\footnote{Zitiert nach Manfred Görtemaker, Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, München 1999, S. 135}


SUMMARY

The paper confronts the paradox that, at a time of growing democratization in the world at large, the role of labour interests within democracy is becoming problematic – even or perhaps especially in those countries where that had previously been well established.

The question is discussed in three aspects:

1. The apparent implications of economic globalization;
2. The consequences of changes within the class of labour itself;
3. Internal changes in the relationship between the political class and citizens in general.

There is no attempt at reaching policy conclusions, as these are seen as depending on normative positions and cannot be derived from a social science discussion. However, the paper concludes by laying bare some of its own assumptions in order to clarify the policy-making task. In particular, it assumes:

that democracy is adversely affected both when the voice of organized labour within democracy is weakened and when labour itself leaves large groups of outsiders unrepresented;

and that the political expression of occupational interests remains important despite the most recent stages of ‘modernization’.

And it concludes by asking certain factual questions of the future:

Will the recently growing occupations outside the old cores of business interests, male, manual manufacturing work, public service and the free professions find some way of effectively expressing their political concerns?

And what will be the fate of interest representation among the marginal and the insecure? Will they be effectively incorporated by existing labour organizations? Will they develop their own, distinctive forms? Or will they remain politically silent?
Fundamental ambiguities affect the place of labour within democracy at the present time. On the one hand, workers of all kinds are benefiting from the spread of formal parliamentary democracy which is currently in progress in an unprecedented number of parts of the world. Further, at a more subtle level of democratization, demands for openness, transparency in the operation of authority, for responsibility in the literal sense of ‘answerableness’ seem to be growing both within many nation states and also at some kind of global or at least international level of dialogue. First the collapse of the old dictatorships in the Iberian peninsula in the 1970s, then that of communism almost everywhere at the end of the 1980s, the gradual re-emergence of democratic regimes in much of Latin America, as well as developments in South Africa, South Korea and some other limited parts of Asia made the final quarter of the twentieth century something of an ‘age of democratization’. Democracy is no longer a system of government peculiar to Western Europe, Australasia, Japan, North America and India.

Of course there continue to be vast exceptions to the trend, especially China. There are also corruptions and abuses, ranging from the intimidation of voters to the illegal funding of political parties, among both new and old democracies. But these do not obscure the overall trend; neither however are they primarily what I mean by the fundamental ambiguities which affect in particular – though not solely – the encounter between labour interests and democracy at precisely this moment of the spread of the institution. A cynical observer might in fact claim that the advance of democracy and its emerging new problems are two sides of the same coin. Previously non-democratic elites may be more willing to risk opening up their regimes to the citizens if the power and role of the latter can be tamed and incorporated as easily as now frequently seems possible.

I shall here concentrate on what I regard as three rather different but inter-related negative developments. They affect mainly the existing industrialized or post-industrial societies and are not always relevant to other parts of the world, which may partly mean that the
locus of democratic development is shifting from those places where it is tired and affected by cynicism and disillusion to those where it is fresh and young, and where certain social changes that subsequently undermine it from within have not yet begun their work. It has in recent years been a very humbling experience for democrats in the so-called advanced nations, beset by declining electoral participation and relations of ill-concealed mutual contempt between politicians and citizens, to see the people of South Africa queuing for hours to have their chance to express their political preferences in the ballot box.

The three issues which I shall discuss are:

1. The apparent implications of economic globalization.
2. The consequences of changes within the class of labour itself.
3. Internal changes in the relationship between the political class and citizens in general.

To discuss the issues in this order means moving from a very macro-perspective on politics to a more detailed one.

Democracy and Globalization

This part of the story is well known. Democracy remains limited primarily to the nation state and levels below that (both geographical and institutional). The European Union is alone in being a supranational geographical entity with a directly elected democratic component, but even that is very weak. None of the great quasi-political international institutions, such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund or the International Labour Organization, embodies any features providing democratic accountability to the world’s citizens. There are some international professional associations which have a membership democracy, but these are not political. At this point in human history, democracy remains among the list of institutions which are nationally confined, and is so even more than language or cuisine.
Meanwhile economic life is becoming internationalized, possibly globalized, in a manner which has become so well known to public debate that it is almost a cliché. Particularly important from the perspective of labour interests is the capacity of firms to organize their activities on a broadly international basis, not only choosing in which locations it best suits them to place specific operations, but also limiting their dependency on any one location for a particular function. More important still is the capacity of financial assets to flow around the world at very short notice, and making use of information resources which are similarly global in their sources.

These changes are particularly relevant for the relationship between labour and democracy. To the extent that businesses seek lower labour costs and freedom from labour regulation, they are likely to move to parts of the world where labour costs are lowest and regulation lightest (Standing 1999). In general, the less democratic a country, the less will its governments protect labour interests, labour normally requiring democratic possibilities to press its political case. Non-democratic countries are also less likely than democracies to have extensive welfare states; therefore non-wage labour costs should be lower too. According to this basic argument, globalization is therefore likely to bring a shift in employment from democracies to dictatorships. Democracies can be expected to respond to this situa-
tion by trying to complete with the dictatorships by deregulating their own labour markets and trying to reduce the welfare state services which lead to high non-wage labour costs. Therefore, globalization can be expected to lead to a situation where non-democracies take the lead in setting (low) labour standards around the world. In other words, the ‘race to the bottom’ in labour standards, as this tendency is usually called, is also a race to the bottom in terms of democratic quality.

This simple argument can be challenged. First, it is not necessarily the case that dictatorships produce unregulated labour markets; often non-democratic regimes are distinguished by their frequent interventions in all areas of social life, including the labour market. These interventions are likely also to be arbitrary and unpredictable, which reduces economic efficiency. On the other hand, there has been a recent tendency for at least some dictatorships to seek economic success for their countries by imposing strict neo-liberal and therefore economically non-interventionist regimes, paradoxical though this might sound. The leading example of this was the now defunct regime of General Pinochet in Chile, where state power involving considerable intervention in daily life, including mass murder and torture, was combined with a virtually text-book implementation of Chicago neo-liberal economics (Drago, 1998). Less dramatically, there are certain examples in south-east Asia where the protection of politics from popular pressure made possible by a lack of democracy is used to implement neo-liberal labour market and other reforms. Most dictatorships want economic success, and one aspect of growing globalization is that this success can be helped by direct inward investment. International investors have a preference for unregulated labour markets and low non-wage labour costs, and dictatorships find it easier to provide these than do democracies.

A second problem with the argument that globalization favours moves to lowest-cost countries is that it greatly exaggerates the capacity of many forms of economic activity, in both services and manufacturing, to relocate at will. Many such activities carry large sunk costs: build-
ings, plants, networks of relationships with suppliers, customers and local sources of business services, skilled labour of various kinds. These cannot be easily abandoned. Furthermore, non-democracies often lack the infrastructure of roads, communications networks and education which employers frequently need. It is precisely because they are not responsive to popular demands that such regimes neglect these services.

The ‘race to the bottom’ theory at least needs some modification and fine-tuning. Certain kinds of economic activities and therefore employment opportunities do move to non-democracies: those that require little in terms of labour skills and both own and social infrastructure. But few regimes are content to occupy such a position in the long run. They expand their educational systems in order to up-grade the skills they offer to inward investors and thus the quality of their economies. Do they find it more difficult to sustain non-democratic systems among a more educated population? The Republic of South Korea would be an example of the contemporaneous growth of both democracy and education. However, a few cases do not test a hypothesis, and there are the problematic cases of the old Soviet empire which for many years achieved much in popular educational performance without needing to concede democratic reform. The issue requires a more thorough testing.

Even within democracies, multinational firms may abuse local democratic achievements by riding roughshod over existing industrial relations institutions, especially where these incorporate elements of economic democracy which constrain the behaviour of managers. This can today be seen particularly clearly in the very different industrial relations strategies being pursued by firms in Denmark and Sweden, two otherwise relatively similar countries where industrial relations are concerned. Danish firms are mainly small and dependent on Denmark as a place in which to locate, a source of employees and of public infrastructure and institutions. Danish employers have been very concerned to remodel the national system of industrial relations within its own historical terms. Giv-
en the small size of its population, Sweden has given birth to an extraordinarily large number of transnational firms. These now have many plants outside Sweden and are likely to have only a small minority of their work forces within the country. It is notable that many Swedish business interests have been seeking a radical dismantling of the Swedish system.

Transnationals will not necessarily confront existing industrial relations institutions. For example, in Britain Japanese employers have often been very concerned to produce a compromise between existing British practices and Japanese ones, in order not to appear as intrusive ‘foreigners’. However, in many cases inward-investing firms do refuse to accept existing patterns, and at least in many developing countries have often been able to be exempted even from national law. Either governments develop different laws for foreign-owner enterprises, with very restricted labour rights, or they set aside certain parts of the country where different law applies and where foreign firms are invited. Globalization enables firms to negotiate with governments in order to develop labour regimes offering few rights to workers, as part of the deal for their willingness to invest in the country concerned. An important consequence of this activity, whether it concerns a challenge to established practices or the demand for separate legal regimes, is usually greater capacity by transnationals to refuse to recognize trade unions. As these forms of globalization spread therefore, unions have greater difficulty sustaining the proportion of the labour force which they represent.

In developing countries, even where labour has considerable political freedom, it cannot offset its weakness in the labour market where overall labour productivity is low and labour supply abundant. From the point of view of the poor democracies, and indeed from that of poor dictatorships, the rich world’s perspective of a flight of jobs away from the advanced world looks very different: the ‘best’ jobs in terms of career possibilities and high skill and knowledge content tend to be retained in the first world, while the third world gets the down-market routine work. This can happen even where there is a good supply of
skilled labour in the poor countries. Highly educated people can be employed on very menial tasks; they are cheap enough to employ in this way despite their educational level, while the menial tasks sometimes gain from the extra competence they bring to them. This is frequently the case in the impact of globalization in India. It is also increasingly an issue in the wealthy countries themselves. Largely because of democratic pressure, educational opportunities are constantly being expanded, but often at a faster rate than the economy can absorb, given that so much recent job creation has taken the form of low-grade services sector work.3

A further related problem is that, even though the wealthy democracies seem able to keep a lion’s share of attractive and high-productivity forms of employment, there is a tendency for such jobs to decline in number. Where the ratio of jobs per unit output is concerned, this is true by definition: improvements in productivity mean a reduction in the labour need per unit output. Considerable effort has been expended in the wealthy countries in recent years to up-skill labour and to enrich the technological component of production of both goods and services, in order to retain advantages over low-labour-cost parts of the world (Crouch, Finegold and Sako, 1999, chs. 2 and 3). But this often takes the form of ‘two steps forward, one step back’, since employment in the sectors concerned can be sustained only by reducing unit labour input. In some sectors, in particular high technology, demand is expanding sufficiently fast for there to be net employment creation, but the continuation of that situation cannot be guaranteed.

3 There is a contradictory logic to the democratic politics of education. Parents and young people seek improved education for their particular children (themselves in the case of young people); but politicians have to offer expanded opportunities for all. Where the demand for educated persons is rising faster than the supply of educated people, this presents no problems. However, when this is not the case, the demand made by parents and young people becomes that they receive an education that will give them a competitive advantage over others within the country. The politicians’ offer of generalized improvement does not answer this at all.
A further factor limiting the crisis of democracy presented by globalization is the fact that, so far, much of the real competition over labour regulation and labour costs has taken place, not between the advanced societies and those in process of development, but within the camp of the former, all of which are democracies. In particular, there has been a form of competition between the UK, the USA and some other countries on the one hand and many countries of the European Union on the other, with Japan playing a rather complex role. For various reasons, labour interests found themselves particularly weak within the two English-speaking democracies during the 1980s, and it became possible both to deregulate the labour market and, in the case of the USA, to reduce considerably welfare state spending and therefore non-wage labour costs. At the time this was happening the EU countries were seeking to construct a form of social Europe which meant avoiding deregulation and reduced welfare. All that the UK and USA had to do, therefore, was to locate themselves at slightly worse levels of labour protection than in the main EU countries to reap certain competitive advantages, with little fear that the EU would follow and engage in a true race to the bottom.

This situation could change and probably is changing. One consequence of the criteria of operation of the European Central Bank and the stability pact is a pressure to deregulate labour markets and contain social expenditure. This is provoking attempts by countries within the single currency to compete with the UK and USA in reducing labour rights, invoking a kind of race to the bottom which may be just about to start. This kind of ‘regime competition’ has interesting implications for democracy in a world where democratic polities remain at nation-state level, implications which would apply whether the race was down or up in terms of standards: a country’s internal parliamentary deci-

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4 Less was done on this latter front in the UK, but for quite different historical reasons. UK welfare spending tends already not to place a particular burden on employment costs, because of the forms of taxation used.
sion-making becomes determined by the actions of competitors rather than by internal choice. This might involve having one’s decisions partly determined by someone else’s democracy, which is an interesting concept.

At present it is difficult to reach definitive conclusions on the extent to which globalization, especially of investment flows, leads to the de facto determination of world labour standards by dictatorships. There are certainly some tendencies in that direction; some offsetting processes which counter it; and some more complex patterns too.

Changes within the Class of Labour

So far I have taken the concept of labour for granted, without either examining what is contained within it or considering whether it remains static over time. Let us begin from the familiar starting point of most social analysis and also indeed of official occupational statistical classifications: labour is structured as in a large industrial enterprise, with small numbers of people occupying various grades of management, rather large numbers in clerical and junior administrative grades, and particularly large numbers in manual work, most engaged in direct production, ranked by different levels of certified skill. The problems and interests of labour have been conventionally seen in terms of these last groups, the different ranks of manual labour. This is particularly so because the next largest, the clerical and junior administrative workers, are in most countries primarily female, often working part-time, and until recent years conventionally ignored in most sociological analysis.

As everybody knows, all this changed. In particular there has been a decline in the proportion of employment comprised by the ‘three Ms’: male manual employment in manufacturing. Although large manufacturing firms still form the backbone of all advanced economies, they by no means dominate them, employment in various kinds of services having overtaken that in manufacturing. To analyse services employment, I prefer to use the analysis developed by Singelmann (1978), which identifies four different services sectors, rather than use the sim-
ple idea of a single tertiary sector (see also Castells, 1996). These are: the distributive sector (i.e. transporting, selling and communicating activities); the business services sector; social and community services; and personal services. Although the divisions among these are not always clear, use of an analysis of this kind does bring out some crucial differences among different kinds of service in terms of both growth patterns and the characteristics of those working in them (e.g. gender, education level) (Crouch, 1999, chs. 2-5). Not all of these services sectors have been important to recent employment change. With the exception of important growth in retail services in the USA, both the distributive and personal services sectors have been rather stable. Business services have grown very rapidly, but the sector remains very small and in many cases its growth is partly illusory, comprising often an outsourcing of existing activities previously contained within manufacturing corporations. In virtually all industrial economies, the major engine of change has been the rise in the proportion of the labour force working in social and community services, which has also been the source in the feminization of the work force which has been such an important feature of recent employment change. Usually the great majority of the work force in this sector is within either public service or employed by charitable organizations; the role of profit-making corporations is relatively low.

Meanwhile, even within manufacturing the proportion of workers actually engaged on the production task has declined, with a growth in routine administrative posts, so-called ‘non-manual’ work, performed mainly by women.

Today’s work force is therefore far less homogeneously male; less likely to be employed in manual work; and less likely to be engaged in manufacturing than during the periods when ‘labour’ was gaining its voice and its recognized place in the polities of the industrial world. These changes have produced both a problem of the homogeneity of interests being represented and, often, a decline in the overall power of the labour interest. Union membership has declined in almost all countries over the past 15-20 years, following a previous period where it had
risen considerably.\textsuperscript{5} The decline in union power and influence has probably been even greater, given the context of high unemployment and globalization. Workers have become very dependent on employers for work; while employers have become less dependent on the work force of any individual country.

Some of the problems which these occupational changes create for unions are complementary: the more successfully a union movement resolves the central problem of managing to recruit and represent the new kinds of worker, the more it has problems of internal heterogeneity; the more it stays within the old manufacturing parameters, the more homogeneous it can be, at the expense of extent of representativeness. I shall consider these opposite forms of the general problem in turn.

\textit{Increasing representativeness and the strains of heterogeneity}

Labour has never been truly at all homogeneous. Even at the height of the rise of manufacturing, there were always important differences of interest between skilled and unskilled workers, for example. But growing heterogeneity has increased the difficulty of pursuing clearly defined, widely shared interests. Most labour organizations have experienced these problems, because most have responded to at least some of the changes. Particularly helpful to their continuing growth and adaptation was the rise of public-service employment associated with the growth of social and community services, government service in democracies always being particularly easy for trade unions to organize. This gave unions a major place in services, and important sources of female members. It did however also bring problems, compromising

\textsuperscript{5} The main exceptions are in those countries having the so-called ‘Ghent system’ of linking trade union membership to the national social insurance system: Belgium itself, Denmark, Finland, Sweden. Here the unions administer the social insurance system, and although there is no requirement on workers to join a union in order to benefit from the scheme, they normally do so in practice. It is notable that Norway, with Iceland the only Nordic country not to have such a system, has a considerably lower union membership than the other countries in that region; Belgium has a far higher membership than either France or the Netherlands, the two countries to which it is culturally close.
what had in several countries been an important stabilizing influence on unions’ economic impact. Many union movements rooted in manufacturing have had a built-in sensitivity to the potential impact of their actions on prices through the need to have the goods produced by their members competitive within export markets. Public-service unions do not have this constraint, and are more likely to indulge in rent-seeking behaviour, producing rivalry and incompatible bargaining goals between themselves and manufacturing unions. Alternatively – and this eventually became the majority case – governments become exceptionally tough on public-service wage claims, which are subjected to a political logic concerning levels of taxation and of the size of government expenditure, while workers in manufacturing are able to gain from productivity improvements. Again, inter-union unity becomes difficult to achieve and the identity of a labour interest becomes confused.

The major increases which have taken place in the female proportion of the labour force stem from this growth of social and community services, the rising proportion of employees in manufacturing who are engaged in routine administration, and the growth of the other services sectors. Viewed from one perspective, this change in the labour force has enabled unions to broaden their base within the society, a fact which is partly represented in the growing proportion of women in many countries who vote for parties associated with the labour movement. However, unions have often been slow to respond fully to the challenges involved, both in recognizing the particular needs of female members, and in accepting some of the changes that have to be made in employment practices and regulation if the number of women with

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6 One will often read that classical manufacturing trade unionism depended on closed economies, so that once the manufacturing industry of a particular nation state had been effectively organized, unions could insulate wage costs from the market. This argument results from the dominance over the thinking of economic science of the US economy, which in the past has been relatively closed (i.e. the proportion of international trade has been relatively small). It has not applied to the western European economies, in particular to those where trade unions have been strongest (Scandinavia, Austria, Belgium) or to Germany, where the export sector and the role of unions within it has been a particularly important aspect of the social market economy.
employment is to rise. Heterogeneity has not only increased problems of managing the labour interest, but has raised those of the goals of that management. This can be seen particularly clearly at present in Germany, where unions are resultant to face the challenge of how to ensure employment protection in a manner that is compatible with increasing job opportunities for women. It is far easier for them (both as organizations and indeed as individual men) to continue to protect existing male employment and the place of married women as housewives.

In itself and in the long run, this growing heterogeneity of the work force is far from being a setback for the role of labour in democracy; it ought in fact to embed that role more deeply and extensively, and also enable labour organizations to achieve a more differentiated and therefore more democratic representation of the working population than that of the simplified concept of the ‘mass worker’. In the short and medium term however it does constitute a challenge, in two senses. First, there is the simple problem of learning how to cope with the new diversity, which requires both organizational and strategic changes. This is partly a matter of the learning curve and therefore of time, but the changes come at a difficult time for organized labour, when so many of its previous political parameters are being challenged. Second, the heterogeneity in the main brings a reduction in strength and power, in that most of the new kinds of worker lack a tradition of having the courage to make demands to employers which became so crucial in the case of manufacturing industry and mining. This is partly because many of the new employees are in individual career paths, where active union involvement can bar future promotion chances; partly because many of them are women, who lack a strong tradition in militancy and who often work part-time, which reduces the relative importance to their

7 Examples of how change can eventually take place can be found: in the restructuring of bargaining partially to reconcile the interests of manufacturing and public-service sectors in Denmark and Finland (for the Danish case, see Due et al 1994); and in the general restructuring of labour regulation to encourage employment growth, particularly among women, in the Netherlands (Visser and Hemerijck, 1997).
lives of their employment; and partly because many of the new, relatively poorly paid jobs in services lack both the clear occupational identities of both manual and professional employment.

Public service employment, the largest single new element in the changes affecting classical unionism, has partly been an exception to this generalization concerning capacity to articulate interests. Protected from constraints of export trade and capable of exercising political pressure, public service workers have since the 1970s often taken the lead in militancy. It has however sometimes taken a strongly rent-seeking form, frequently becoming embedded in small category associations fighting to sustain particular privileges in isolation from the rest of the union movement. At one level this can itself be seen as a strengthening of democracy, but it has also helped render the role of labour within polities problematic, leading to retaliation. This can in particular take the form of a privatization of the services concerned, which might then lead to a reduction of the role of unions in those services altogether.

Retained homogeneity and the crisis of representativeness

The alternative problem, a decline in representativeness, occurs when unions find it difficult to recruit particular categories of worker. This can happen for two reasons. First, many of the new kinds of worker in private services sectors are difficult for unions to reach, for reasons which will be discussed below. Second, and reaching back to the previous discussion of globalization, multinational enterprises may be more reluctant than national employers to accept unions among their work forces.

With the exception of Denmark, Sweden and to some extent Belgium, unions have always had a difficult time recruiting private service workers. This is for a considerable diversity of reasons. In some cases the workers themselves, like administrative workers in manufacturing, either feel themselves superior to the type of worker for which unions normally exist, or are in individual career paths, presenting the difficulty already discussed above. In other cases, in contrast, many workers in
the new services are in labour-market positions which are so marginal, insecure and weak that they neither dare risk nor have much of an objective interest in committing themselves to a union within any particular place of employment. To the extent that there has been a shift from ‘3M jobs’ to ‘MacJobs’ there has been a decline in workers' self-confidence and power of assertion.

Curiously, these opposite characteristics of different parts of the new work force lead to similar outcomes, and are currently being reinforced by a new trend. This is the shift in labour-hiring conditions away from employment as conventionally known towards a form of self-employment where, although the worker spends most or even all of his/her working time with the one organization, his/her formal employment status is as self-employed. This is happening for a number of reasons. First, the unpredictable product markets of the post-Keynesian economy lead employers to want to be able to change the size of their work force rapidly; this is done more easily if workers can be seen as external agents than if they have to become part of the organization with acquired rights within it. Second, it is easier to make use of labour of this kind in certain – though by no means all – services activities than in manufacturing, where integrated teams are often needed. Third, by requiring persons working for them to have self-employed status, employers avoid both legal obligations and many non-wage labour costs. It is by no means impossible for trade unions to represent self-employed workers, or alternatively for these latter to develop their own forms of organization, as in the case of the free professions or artigiani. There are however difficulties, at both ends of the employment spectrum. The high-earning self-employed, unless they are members of these last-mentioned categories, are likely to see themselves as independent individuals, not requiring any organizational help. The low-earning self-employed are likely to be too anxious for their future work chances to engage in any organizational activities.

This weakening has negative implications for democracy at two levels. First, with the exception of some church organizations, trade unions have been the only organizations which have represented the in-
terests of the mass of working people within democracy, most other political organizations representing either business interests or those of relatively privileged groups. Second, the particular problem that unions have in reaching out to the new groups of marginal and insecure workers creates both a problem of socio-political exclusion for these latter, and an awkward position of relative position for the unions. Both are unhealthy for democracy. This second question merits further discussion.

The new insecure work force characteristic of the post-Keynesian, globalizing economy remains outside established industrial relations systems for several reasons: it is partly because the objective commitment of these workers to a particular employment is rarely strong enough to encourage them to join a union; partly because, in their insecurity, they are frightened of employers; and partly because they are often unemployed and therefore out of reach of the industrial relations system and its organizations.

Outside the framework of unionism, these groups have also been weak at constructing other organizational forms for expressing their interests, apart from occasional sporadic protests. Many of them are disconnected from social institutions in general: they have no prolonged connection to a specific work place, occupation or employer; they are less likely to vote in elections of all kinds; often they are from ethnic minorities and lack both legal and other connections to the institutions of the host society, including its labour organizations. They are barely part of the functioning system of democracy and even social order. As such they pose far large social questions than those relating solely to the role of organized labour. In many respects these groups are the product of a pure free-market system. They are involved in no institutions which might pose barriers to the operation of markets but act as disconnected individuals. They constitute marginal resources in the economic sense as well as the social, and therefore constitute an important resource of flexibility. But they are also beyond the reach of the minimum levels of social integration which market processes take for granted.
Not surprisingly, unions often find it far easier to ignore them, and to concentrate on their existing kinds of member, who have become the insiders of the labour market, whose interests can often develop in a way which ranges them and the new outsiders as mutually hostile. The insiders and their unions fear that employers will keep seeking to reduce their numbers in favour of an increased role for the considerably more flexible outsiders; the outsiders are envious of the security of the insiders. This process can leave unions in a very vulnerable position. There has often been a long-term problem of the difficulty of unions in representing the lowest levels of the work force. Virtually all movements started with the organization of skilled labour, and then tried to develop a role among the unskilled. Overall they succeeded, but there were always problems of the marginality of the least skilled, their low incomes, and often their immigrant position. The issue is not therefore a new one. It is however particularly intense at the present time given the tendencies which we have been discussing. Whether they want to or not, unions can find themselves increasing the gap between the existing secure work force and both those in insecure jobs and those unable to find employment at all. Since the legitimacy of unions is based partly on their claim to represent the disadvantaged, and given that they are not really accepted among the ranks of the truly privileged, this leaves them very vulnerable to social criticism. The general context produced by this is problematic for the extension of democracy.

The Changing Relationship between the Political Class and Citizens.

Finally, we need to consider some somewhat different issues currently affecting politics which, combined with the issues discussed so far, make labour’s capacity to represent its interests within democracy difficult. This is the question of the increasing professionalization of politics, which is in itself by no means new; Max Weber and Roberto Michels wrote about it in the early twentieth century. The process does however continue to develop new implications, rendering problematic
in particular the role of mass party organizations. While this affects many interests, labour is among those most concerned.

Classical models of political party structure envisaged a set of concentric circles. The widest represented the electorate, or at least the target electorate of a particular party; then came the circle of party members; then successive circles of activists and those involved in the central decision-making of the party; and at the centre the political leadership. According to the model, the mass party, which is seen as lying within the target electorate, mediates between that electorate and the party organization; the organization, which in turn lies within the party, mediates through its various levels between it (and by extension the target electorate) and the leadership. The model was never so important for elite parties which did not give a large role to mass memberships, but has been fundamental for labour-movement parties, Christian democracy, and various ethnic or regional parties. There are many reasons why the model does not really work, but I shall here focus on certain distortions to it which have accelerated in pace in recent years.

First to be considered – though not necessarily the first chronologically – is the changing character of the target electorate where labour-based parties are concerned. The occupational changes discussed above have considerably changed the political needs and aspirations of this electorate; the old labour core has become smaller, making necessary an expanded definition of the target, while new occupational forms and problems needed to be taken on board. According to the concentric models theory, this involves a change in the definition of the target electorate. But this requires also a shift in the location within the overall electorate of the mass party, the different levels of which should then be expected to transmit changed messages from the population to the leadership. But party memberships are unlikely to change so easily. They will frequently continue to represent old, declining electorates and may actively resist attempts by leaderships to relocate within and relate to new ones. The obvious response of leaderships to this situation is to by-pass the mass membership and develop their own means of access to the electorate, using modern professional methods of opin-
ion research and marketing techniques. This challenges both the democratic role and the expertise of the mass party, which rarely has knowledge of a kind which can rival that of the professional advisors. While normally the leadership will recruit its advisors on opinion and marketing from among party sympathizers, politics being an area of life characterized by extreme low trust, this is not necessarily the case; sometimes pure professionals will be held by a financial link rather than an ideological loyalty.

Meanwhile and more generally, the whole process of policy formation is also being professionalized as the role of social and natural science expertise becomes more important to policy-making, and as the various sciences themselves become increasingly specialized and unable to communicate to a general public outside their own circles. Advice from these specialists is required by party and government if political leaders are to be adequately informed. Again, both the wider and also the intermediate levels of the party apparatus have difficulty in competing with the knowledge that flows from this advice, and find themselves marginalized. Again, although leaders might have a preference for politically loyal advisors, they must sometimes go completely outside their own party circles and ‘buy’ wisdom in the market.

The role of the party organization does not disappear completely. Indeed, the more that political leaders depend on paid advice and, in particular, on elaborate and costly election campaigns, the more they need immense sums of money which, in the first instance, might be expected to be raised through the parties. Party members therefore find themselves confronted with increasing demands for financial help at the same time that the party seems to have little other use for them. Communications from a party leadership to its members become just part of the commercial junk mail arriving with the postman, indistinguishable from various commercial promotions and probably emanating from the same market research and sales firms. The whole question of membership of a mass political party becomes problematic. Meanwhile, the leadership will have been in search of more promising sources of money, one side effect of which has been the use of illegal forms of funding.
A further side effect, which may in fact overlap with that of financial corruption, concerns the overlap between the new professionalized advisory and consultancy links with parties on the one hand, and the desire of commercial organizations to lobby governments for favours on the other. Itself as old as the idea of politics, the existence of lobbies and their kinks with inner political circles should create no surprises. However, the concurrence of lobbying with the professionalization of advice has an important consequence. A particularly powerful political role is played by individuals and organizations which both give advice to politicians and work as professional lobbyists on behalf of economic and other interests, or of go-betweens who link these two groups. Parties increasingly cease to resemble the model of concentric circles. Instead, party leaderships are linked by a series of ellipses to consultants and then on to lobbies and interests leading well away from the original, and possibly even future, target electorates. The shape of the ellipse becomes increasingly determined by financial flows, from leaders to consultants and from lobbies to consultants, and possibly on to parties. While there is nothing new in any of this, there are grounds for believing that it has increased in very recent years, given both the growing detachment of parties from strong social bases and the professionalization of many of the activities around politics.

All this clearly creates problems for democracy, and for the financial probity of politics and government; but does it create any specific problems for labour's role in democracy? There are two possibilities. First, let us assume that labour organizations become part of the consultancy/lobbying nexus, as they often do in practice. They have some relevant expertise and can be of value to the leadership of a labour-oriented political party as being both ideologically close and expert. They are certainly also lobbies with political needs, and sometimes in a position to pay. In these circumstances labour becomes part of the new system; it is not excluded as some other, less well organized elements of the mass party might be. On the other hand it risks becoming part of the exclusive and possibly corrupt circles (or ellipses) around the contemporary state. This returns us to our earlier discussion of
organized labour’s rather exposed role at a time when a number of under-privileged, unorganized interests have emerged which labour finds it difficult to represent. Organized labour rarely becomes central enough to the politico-economic system to be among the securely privileged, but it is remote enough from the outsiders, those lacking the financial and organizational resources to enter the system, to be the object of criticism and resentment.

An alternative possibility is that labour will find itself excluded from the ellipses of advice, the flows of advice and funds. This may happen because labour organizations are poor and unable to afford becoming serious professionals – in terms of both providing the consultancy and providing the funds that oil the wheels of the lobbying. It may also happen because labour organizations remain as part of the old target electorate beyond which the leadership wants to move, so that the advice it gives will be suspect and unwelcome. This is also quite a feasible scenario. Labour is rarely able to match the funds that commercial organizations are able to bring to bear to represent their direct trading interests. The more important that flows of funds become to the political process, and the less important that the sheer capacity and enthusiasm of party organization counts, then the more labour interests (and even more so those of the marginalized beyond organized labour’s ranks) will find that they lose out in the game of political influence.

What is to be Done?

I do not intend to discuss a list of policy proposals here, as these depend very much on the political preferences and beliefs of the reader. All I shall do by way of a conclusion is to draw attention to some of the implications of certain possible normative positions.

Underlying my argument has been an implicitly normative perspective, which assumes that democracy is adversely affected both when the voice of organized labour within democracy is weakened and when labour itself leaves large groups of outsiders unrepresented. It would be possible to contest this from a hard neo-liberal position, which would
argue as follows: All that labour organizations do is interfere with the free market allocation, which in the long run is in everyone’s best interests, and which cannot be improved on by political or other social processes. Therefore, a weakening of organized labour strengthens rather than weakens democracy, because democracy is served by those processes which in the long run are in everyone’s best interests.

There are three problems with this argument. First, the statement that allocations stemming from free markets are in everyone’s best interests and cannot be improved on by other processes cannot be taken for granted but require intense examination and sustained debate. It is not my task here to enter that debate, save to note that the position is deeply contested. Second, there is something flawed in the tendency for some neo-liberals to equate democracy with the market. If democracy has any meaning at all it refers to a system of government, and therefore relates to a process of collective decision-making, with a strong presumption that there is something discursive about this. The market represents the outcome of a mass of individual and collective decision-making, but it is not itself a decision-making forum. The market might be helpful to democracy; it might result from democracy; but democracy cannot be equated with it. It is logically possible to argue that the market is superior to democracy, which then involves a series of further difficult discussions. But the two have to be recognized as separate processes.

Finally, neo-liberals need to explain why, if organized interests always distort outcomes and that therefore markets should be left free from them, business lobbies seem to grow rather than decline in importance with the advance of neo-liberal policies. (This is not a problem for neo-classical economic theory, which is entitled to argue that the practices of the empirical political world are not its concern, but it is a problem for neo-liberals, active in the political world and usually engaging in the round of lobbying.) If it is appropriate within market democracy for large firms to develop political links and seek to influence governments, than labour cannot be excluded from that process if the goal of democracy is still to be acknowledged; and stark inequali-
ties in the capacity of capital and labour to exercise that role have to be regarded as problematic.

A further implicit assumption of my argument is that occupational interests remain important. Some would say that this is decreasingly the case. For example, Anthony Giddens (1994; 1998) has argued that most of the issues currently confronting the world, from ecological disasters to sexual identity, have nothing to do with either the occupational world or relations between capital and labour, and that we must move on to different formulations of identifiable interests.

I do not in any way want to argue that all politics can be reduced to relations between capital and labour, though I am not convinced that Giddens is correct in seeing the present time as one when issues going beyond the capital/labour question have become particularly salient: one could make out a similar case for many past times too. I am also surprised at some of the issues which Giddens regards as having little to do with the role of capital: ecological disasters in particular. I would however particularly contest the argument that somehow the main political problems relating to labour have now been resolved, such that they no longer need to be at the centre of pressing concerns. The present period is, in contrast, one of unusually intense activity on the labour front. The whole process of labour-market regulation, welfare state and the role of trade unions established during the twentieth century, once seen as a kind of unchallengeable acquis social, has been placed firmly on the agenda of renegotiation, with clearly a number of alternative potential resolutions which merit extensive debate and lobbying.

Further, certain issues which used to be only a minor part of a labour agenda have now been moved squarely within its compass. I refer to the place of the family. Within industrial society there eventually developed a kind of consensus that married women, certainly mothers, should remain outside the paid labour force. This is no longer the case in the post-industrial economy, one of whose central features is the dual-earner couple. As a result a mass of issues, ranging from child care to how families cope with work-related stress, have not only entered the political agenda, but have entered it as an aspect of occupational
and labour questions. Further still, recent changes in the US and British economies suggest that, while part-time work may still grow as an aspect of labour flexibility, a century of generally reducing working hours may well be followed by a new rise. Certain occupations, at very diverse points of the occupational hierarchy, are now seeing a major increase in working hours. The more time that people spend at work, the more they should be expected to encounter problems related to working life which require some political expression.

The political importance of labour therefore remains central. Whether it has to remain one of the few major bases of political party organization is more of an open question. Within western Europe the second half of the 20th century – the only period in world history to have demonstrated the operation of stable mass democracy over a sizable number of countries – produced two dominant bases of political identity: Christianity and position in the labour market. There were other bases – rural society, minority ethnicities, etc. – but they were minor in comparison with these two. Previous, less democratic periods, had produced different patterns. The clarity of the two great identities was also less clear in other parts of the democratic world, in particular in India, Japan and the USA, even if appropriate substitutes are found for Christianity in the first two cases. By the end of the twentieth century parties rooted in Christianity and/or position in the labour market were also facing challenges in their European heartland – from racial, ethnic and cultural identities, from ecological concerns – though they remained statistically dominant. It is difficult to anticipate developments very far into the twenty-first century. We should certainly should not take for granted as either factually likely or even appropriate that the two great twentieth-century identities will still be dominating the organization of politics in, say, 25 years time.

One can acknowledge this while still insisting that the world of labour and occupations will continue to produce issues and problems central to the working of democracy. What is in doubt and does demand attention is extent of democratic representation that labour interests can achieve. This in turn resolves itself into two sub-questions: will the re-
cently growing occupations outside the old cores of business interests, male, manual manufacturing work, public service and the free professions find some way of effectively expressing their political concerns? And what will be the fate of interest representation among the marginal and the insecure? Will they be effectively incorporated by existing labour organizations? Will they develop their own, distinctive forms? Or will they remain politically silent?

List of Literature