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Source: *The Good Society*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2011), pp. 102-118

Published by: Penn State University Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/goodsociety.20.1.0102>

Accessed: 03-12-2016 22:40 UTC

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# A Civic Science

KAROL EDWARD SOŁTAN

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My goal in this article is to sketch a civic science as the intellectual context for the work of Elinor Ostrom and the Bloomington School, which we are celebrating in this special issue of *The Good Society*. They have provided us with a distinctive model of research and theory development, but also a distinctive formulation of the nature of this discipline still struggling to be born, despite its very old roots. The more self-conscious development of this civic science is, as I see it, the next step also for the projects this journal has been associated with: the ideas of a political economy of a good society and of new constitutionalism.<sup>1</sup>

Civic science, of course, has its roots in Aristotle (what discipline doesn't?). But efforts to create it have intensified in the last 200 years. Tocqueville saw a need for a new science of politics that would develop the art and science of association. And as Filippo Sabetti rightly reminds us, Tocqueville was not alone. Carlo Cattaneo in Italy also called for a "public science" along the same lines.<sup>2</sup> Others have made similar calls over the years, as they contributed to a civic science. But despite all this work, there is still no civic science.

Again and again these efforts have been marginalized, or channeled in a different, distinctly non-civic direction. So contemporary political science and sociology, understood in a more positivist way, are now well established, but a civic science committed to a civic form of unity of theory and practice can be found only in individual works or in schools of thought like the Bloomington School, isolated from each other. So it is easier to see

THE GOOD SOCIETY, VOL. 20, NO. 1, 2011

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the Bloomington School as part of political economy and public choice, or as a contribution to new institutionalism. It is more difficult to see it as a more original and challenging effort to build a civic science inspired by the precedent of de Tocqueville and the American founders, among others. But I believe this is the School's most important contribution. It is this larger project that I want to discuss in this essay, a project shared by the Bloomington School and many others, including myself.

Our project is to create a new discipline with deep historical roots, a civic science. Because of the narrow associations of the word "science" in English, we propose to call it civic studies. But in languages where the word "science" has a broader meaning, a civic science it should be. So it is "nauki obywatelskie" in Polish, where the project is also under way.

The project will succeed—if it succeeds at all—if it grows incrementally, in stages, with many individuals and groups serving as its co-creators. But in September 2007, we did give it a small initial push by bringing together a group of scholars (Harry Boyte, Steve Elkin, Peter Levine, Jane Mansbridge, Elinor Ostrom, Rogers Smith and myself) to think how best to proceed. What emerged was a "framing statement" for the project,<sup>3</sup> and a plan for a Summer Institute of Civic Studies (a very intense seminar, perhaps eventually evolving into something more like a summer school), to be coupled each summer with a Civic Studies Conference. The first Institute was held in 2009.

A discipline is nothing more than an institutionalized intellectual community, and this is what we aim to create. The institutionalization will require its journals, associations, conferences, university departments and so on. But the intellectual community can be created more simply and directly. It already exists in the works of many scholars, some long dead.

The claim is that this discipline, this intellectual community is already in the making, the people who would make it up, are already out there. But they need to be brought together. The second claim is that there would be a great intellectual payoff: we can learn from each other. This I know to be true because we have already created this community in our discussions, and in our heads, during the Summer Institute at Tufts. And the third claim is that there could also be a practical payoff.

Civic studies takes its inspiration from major thinkers: from Aristotle, from de Tocqueville, from Dewey. It draws from theoretical texts, but also

from texts that engage directly in politics. It makes sense to begin our Summer Institutes with the much quoted sentence from *Federalist* #1:

It has been frequently remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force.<sup>4</sup>

But we also begin with Vaclav Havel's attempt to capture in a phrase the fundamental spirit and motive of the opposition movements that helped bring down communism while fighting to build a *civic* society (or a *civil* society, as some say). At the center of these movements, says Havel, was a feeling of *responsibility for the world*.<sup>5</sup> The phrase can be easily misunderstood. The opposition to communism was not notable for its global perspective; they did not in any serious way feel responsibility for the whole world. They felt the responsibility for *their* world, even if it was bounded and local and small. They felt they ought to be, within the drastic limits they lived under, *co-creators* of their world. They were committed to a *civic ideal*.

Civic studies is, as Vincent Ostrom says, "a science of citizenship."<sup>6</sup> But it is not about citizenship as a form of membership, and its associated rights or duties. That might be an altogether different discipline. It is about a civic ideal, and the institutions and ways of thinking that could be shaped by this ideal: a civic society, a civic culture, a civic capitalism, a civic world.

A science and art of association? Perhaps, but only if we do not think of association as an end in itself. It is a science and art of shared problem solving (as followers of Dewey might say), or of developing shared projects. A science of shared projects, then? I will come back to that.

But perhaps it is, after all, that long awaited new science of politics? It would be, only if we are willing to adopt a truly general notion of politics, which the contemporary science of politics is unwilling to do, because it is reluctant to be sufficiently imperialistic and take all human interactions as forms of tacit or explicit politics. And also only if we are willing to formulate a science of politics that is prescriptive in the way the contemporary science of politics is unwilling to be.

We could call it other things. It incorporates efforts to think constitutionally, understood in the broadest sense.<sup>7</sup> It is a *eunomics*, a science of

good order, as Lon Fuller would have it.<sup>8</sup> It is a social science in the form of phronesis,<sup>9</sup> or perhaps a science of social potential.

### Citizens as Co-Creators

Harry Boyte, in his contribution to this issue, cites President George W. Bush's Inaugural Address: "I ask you to seek a common good beyond your comfort, to be citizens, not spectators, to serve your nation, beginning with your neighborhood."<sup>10</sup> We can say more: to serve the world, beginning with your nation. But one can also point to the tension between the idea of citizenship and the idea of service. Citizenship is best seen as a very distinctive form of service: not simply sacrificing for the common good, but sacrificing in co-creating the common good, or the *res publica*. But Bush's Inaugural Address is worth citing because it does make the point, very much emphasized in Bloomington, that this work, this co-creation is not simply in the service of the state. There are countless venues small and large; the world of co-creation is polycentric as a matter of fact, and ought to be so. On this point there is now a very widespread agreement across the global political spectrum, from those who favor Hayek and the Bloomington School to the followers of Roberto Mangabeira Unger, the Brazilian politician, philosopher and legal theorist, and great proponent of the theory and practice of decentralized democratic experimentalism.

The cause of those who would like to take the perspective of the citizen, and not that of the spectator or the subject, is not well served by the contemporary intellectual division of labor. The social sciences are firmly committed to the perspective of the spectator, with their task of describing and explaining the world as it is, their efforts to identify its causal structure, and perhaps even to predict human behavior. Fortunately these social sciences are not very successful. If they were, they would show us a fully determined and predictable world, in which there is no room for human creation, action and agency—and hence no room for citizenship.

Consider an example of predictive success of social science cited by Peter Levine in this issue. We can predict remarkably well the outcome of elections for U.S. President simply from the state of the US economy a year before the elections.<sup>11</sup> If that is so, then surely the world is predictable, and presidential elections are fully determined by economic causes. All the creative impulses, strategic cleverness and energy that go into political campaigns have no effect, so it seems. Not so fast. Consider a thought

experiment: suppose one of the political parties did not run a campaign at all, would the result be the same? It would, if campaigns do not matter. But as I run the experiment in my head, the result is quite different, and campaigning does matter, though the campaigns of candidates, each strategically clever and energetic, often will cancel each other out. But their work and effort matters.

The perspective of the citizen does not favor life in a fully predictable world. It favors and supports a world full of initiatives and projects, many of them not predictable at all, but rather delightful surprises. Communism collapses in Europe, even though only a few months earlier it seemed part of the permanent furniture of the world. The Arab world is

awakened in a series of (almost) peaceful demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt. Who predicted that? Predictability and hence order are neither possible nor desirable. We want, to be sure, a world in which there are few *unpleasant* surprises, so a world that is partially predictable and partially ordered. But as citizens (or as entrepreneurs) we also aim for a world full of delightful surprises.

What sorts of ideas, what sorts of theories can help make it easier to create such delightful surprises? The mainstream social sciences will provide limited empirical help, and their central ideas and methodologies will often be a hindrance. Yet at the margins of the social sciences, often in between existing disciplines, we do find extraordinary work, which if brought together could create a new

intellectual community and a new intellectual discipline that would indeed look at the world from the perspective of a co-creator, a citizen. It would be an instrument of co-creation; it would understand reality in the distinctive manner of someone who takes part in the creation of reality.

In civic studies, we think of citizens as co-creators of their world. If we really think through this idea we will reach far from its usual context of decentralized democratic politics. Human projects are of the most varied kind, and human creation is a product of the interaction of minds, not of minds operating in isolation. To the extent this is true, all creation will be seen as co-creation, and the civic perspective will be a way of taking the idea of human being as creator to the hilt. It will elaborate not so much an art and science of association, but the art and science of human creation and co-creation.

The cause of those who would like to take the perspective of the citizen, and not that of the spectator or the subject, is not well served by the contemporary intellectual division of labor.

Civic studies understood in this way is not some small complement to democratic theory. It is about a civic ideal, which is broader and deeper than democracy. It is about human beings as creators. So it takes a distinctive view of humanity. It is helpful to locate it in the spectrum of views distinguished by their degree of recognition of human agency. At one extreme we have no recognition, human action is seen as determined by some external structure—a causal structure in general, or some social structure in particular. Or action is seen as largely due to essentially random causes: change is due to Darwinian processes of random variation and differences in survival rates. Against this view various authors have tried to develop descriptions of human action that allow some *recognition* of human creative agency, and attempt to describe the relationship between agency and structure. This has been a characteristic effort in sociological theory, and some forms of radical social theory, including Talcott Parsons' theory of social action,<sup>12</sup> Anthony Giddens's structuration theory,<sup>13</sup> the work of Castoriadis,<sup>14</sup> and of the group of scholars connected with the journal *Thesis 11*, especially its long time editor Johann Arnason.<sup>15</sup>

In linguistics the recognition of human linguistic creativity was a key part of Chomsky's polemic against behavioral linguistics. Chomsky's generative grammar was a theory that does not aim to predict what people will say, nor explain what sentences they have produced. It allows for the creative use of language. It is simply a codification of grammatical judgments. But it is also not concerned with the processes of creation of the grammar, or the processes of discovery of better grammars. The grammars are taken as given. Grammars certainly evolve, but they are not created. In any case that is not the concern of generative grammar. We are, as far as generative grammar is concerned, creators and co-creators of what we say, but not of the grammatical rules we use. We can codify the rules implied in our grammatical judgments, but we need not evaluate those judgments.

Civic studies takes the idea of human being as creator and co-creator more seriously still. The characteristic task of civics is not only to recognize the existence of human agency and creative capacity, but to promote it. We take the idea of human being as creator and co-creator to the hilt: our theories do not simply *recognize* human creative agency, they *promote* it—we need more and better agency. Our special concern is for shared creation, not the individual creator working alone. But perhaps all human creation is to some degree shared creation: a product of human minds in interaction, a product of shared projects.

## Paths Toward Civic Studies

I can think of at least four very distinctive paths that can bring someone to civic studies. You can first begin with various theoretical and intellectual commitments, searching for a larger intellectual community—a group with whom you might disagree, but from whom you can learn. The starting point can be the Bloomington School, or critical social theory, or normative sociology, inspired by Philip Selznick,<sup>16</sup> or by Lon Fuller’s eunomics.<sup>17</sup> It can be various forms of new constitutionalism, or social science as phronesis,<sup>18</sup> or the kind of “positive” social science,<sup>19</sup> that is emerging now from the new positive psychology,<sup>20</sup> or it may be Dewey and a pragmatic inclination.

Second, you can also begin with practical commitments to social movements of civic renewal (inspired by Gandhi, or Alinsky, or the Solidarity of Poland’s anti-communist opposition, or by Serbia’s Otpor, or the current Arab Awakening), or to community organizing, or civic society organizing. And you search for more substantial intellectual capital, especially in efforts to articulate projects of co-creation, rather than simple resistance to power. You want to move beyond the immediate nuts and bolts of your organizing work, to see better the larger picture. Larger theories give us stronger motivation and confidence. Rigorous and practically realistic theories give us greater effectiveness.

If your starting point is somewhere in the human potential movement, or the social potential movement, you may be frustrated with the pure dreamers and visionaries around you. If you search for serious rigor and realism, you might turn to civic studies.

And third, you could begin with a worry about the defects of contemporary civic education in schools, and the intellectual deficiencies of programs in civic engagement in universities. You might reason as follows: serious civics courses in high schools will be easier to organize when high school civics is like high school biology, a simplified introduction to a discipline recognized at the university level. And civics will be recognized at the university level when it is a serious discipline, a recognized part of our intellectual division of labor the way biology is.

Finally, your starting point could be a more general desire to reform modern culture, and more broadly an unhappiness with modern culture, especially the dominance of instrumental reason, of positivist skepticism about values and about human creative agency. Perhaps you are worried about the influence of ideas that undermine hope, producing disillusionment and disenchantment.



Some have called for a deep cultural transformation, a metanoia.<sup>21</sup> But how can one do that? Should we wait for inspired leaders, or for the right kind of public intellectuals? There is a better strategy: change the organization of the content of what we teach. To do that seriously in schools, we need to do it seriously in universities. To do that seriously in universities, we need to really change the organization of the disciplines. A new discipline or a new family of disciplines which could serve as a center from which new ideas radiate must produce ideas that are worthy of being taken seriously: interesting, deep, and well-tested in a variety of ways. Vague pieties, no matter how well intentioned, will not do.

### Theoretical Canon of Civic Studies

Civic studies will make progress through a dialogue between diverse intellectual traditions that in one form or another take the idea of human beings as co-creators of their world seriously. They allow a place for human creativity or human agency in their account of the human world. But they also promote human creativity or agency. Civic studies should be a forum of dialogue and disagreement from which different schools of thought learn.

To have such a forum of dialogue, or to be able to teach civic studies, we must have something like a theoretical canon. How can we determine who belongs in this canon? How could we possibly agree, especially before we really have an institutionalized intellectual community? We do not have to agree fully, and our partial agreements will inevitably evolve. A settled canon would be one sign that an intellectual community is dead. But it would be good to have an evolving canon, with some disagreements but also some agreements. Over the last few years we have been organizing Summer Institutes of Civic Studies, including a sequence of nine sessions on civic theory. We had no choice but to propose a canon, and a very limited one at that.

We included, among others, the Bloomington School, Friedrich Hayek, Edmund Burke, Robert Putnam, social science as phronesis, critical social theory, Roberto Unger, Stephen Elkin, Philip Selznick and Charles Lindblom. We might have included (and perhaps should have) Tocqueville, Dewey and the capabilities approach (Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, David Crocker). What thinkers and schools of thought get an inside track onto this list? It is a *theoretical* canon, so there must be some serious theoretical work. And it must be supportive (in some sense) of civic practice

(in some sense). Simple mainstream positivist social science does not get on this list easily. And neither does your ordinary political or moral philosophy. It helps if your work is hard to classify, or if it is natural to describe it as a mixture of social science and philosophy.

The Ostroms belong on the list. They are political scientists using game theory and rational choice models, drawing deeply on political philosophy, recognized for their contributions to political economy and the new institutional economics. Sen is another thinker notoriously difficult to allocate to a discipline. He is an economist, a social choice theorist, and a political philosopher. These are typical examples of theorists that belong in the theoretical canon of civic studies. They take seriously the goal of articulating ideals, but also the need to base our actions in an understanding of how the world actually works.

Unger asks us to take to the hilt the idea of society as artifact. He is a constructive social theorist, a philosopher, a theorist of law, a political activist and a politician. Another prime example, in short, of a thinker who belongs in the theoretical canon of civic studies.

Critical social theorists have as their goal, according to one formulation, the rational reconstruction of the conditions of possibility of human emancipation. The language may be obscure, and its formulation inspired by Kant may not be most apt for practical purposes. So instead of “conditions of possibility,” we can consider anything that diminishes impediments. The goal then is practical on its face: to study what can contribute to human emancipation.

Social science as *phronesis*, proposed by Flyvbjerg, is inspired by Aristotle and by Foucault, but also ready to engage in detailed empirical research. Once again a mixture of facts and values, philosophy and social science. Flyvbjerg belongs in our canon, too.

Lon Fuller was an American legal theorist, writing about the relation of law and morality, but also about the details of contract law. But Fuller also proposed a new kind of social science, which he called *economics*, the science of good order. And he developed some sketches of what such a science would involve, combining empirics with normative concerns.

Lon Fuller (among others) inspired Philip Selznick, whose life work in what we might call normative sociology, or (as he did) a humanist social science, mixing social science, philosophy and history in an effort to understand “the conditions and processes that frustrate ideals or, instead, give them life and hope.”<sup>22</sup> Selznick was also influenced by Dewey. And Dewey, together with the many thinkers he has inspired, also belongs in the theoretical canon of civic studies.

## Venues of Civic Work

One way to set the shifting and uncertain boundaries of civic studies is to consider its theoretical canon. Another is to consider the different *venues* where civic work takes place, and the different practical considerations that arise in each venue. Here too we will inevitably need an evolving canon of venues. And here, too, we have been forced by circumstances to make a start. The venues we have discussed in our summers at Tufts have included the person, negotiations, deliberation, neighborhood and community, public work, civic capitalism, social movements, “color revolutions,” constitutional regimes in general and regimes in special categories of settings (e.g. in deeply divided societies), the US, and the world. Obviously this misses a great deal. It misses for example all countries other than the US (considered individually), the Arab world (considered together), the EU, the internet, the favela, the world of extreme poverty more generally, the profit making corporation, the regulatory state, or oceans or forests or ecosystems more generally. This list also misses, as it happens, some of the areas in which the Bloomington School has made its greatest contributions. We should add metropolitan areas and the provision of common pool resources as venues of civic work. The extraordinary diversity of this very incomplete list shows the potential, both intellectual and practical, of civic studies.

The characteristic task of civics is not only to recognize the existence of human agency and creative capacity, but to promote it.

Two venues of civic work can illustrate especially well how far civic studies can go, its potential for intellectual imperialism, so to speak. I have in mind, first of all, the *person* and the *human life* as a venue of civic work, and (second) the *modern world* as a venue of civic work.

### *The Person as a Venue of Civic Work*

Consider the intriguing borderline between civics and both clinical psychology and the new research program of positive psychology. On the surface—you might think—they have nothing to say to each other. In fact they face each other directly when we consider the *human person as a shared project*. The project of a person, and the project of a human life, are plainly not equally shared by all, and not equally shared over time. But they are shared nonetheless: shared by parents and friends, and shared also by professionals called upon to help. All of them can be seen as co-creators of the

person, all are in need of articulating the unique project which constitutes each person, and to do so in a manner that can help develop the project, making it reach its full potential.

In contemporary positive psychology a fully developed person tends to be identified with the production of “positive experiences.”<sup>23</sup> But clinical psychology has of course many models of the human person as project, not all of them formulated quite in those terms.

What then is the relationship of civics and clinical psychology? It seems that the developing and testing of alternative ideas of the human person as project is an activity very much akin to clinical psychology, except that it is not *clinical*, since it does not take medicine as a model. The civic model of intervention, of the help we can provide to another, is a model of co-creation, shared development of the human person as a project, not an expert intervening to restore health.

Each person, each human life can be seen as a shared project. And civic studies can develop a potentially fruitful area of overlap with clinical psychology, taking each human life one at a time. But human lives as projects can be addressed also on the large scale: in government policies and institutional reforms. The goal of human development, as conceived by the capabilities approach, and now promoted in the Human Development and Capability Association,<sup>24</sup> is the enhancement of the quality of human lives. It is, we might say, the development of human lives as projects. This is an improvement over the identification of development with the growth of GDP per capita, or with utilitarian style maximization of happiness, or of positive experiences, or of preference satisfaction. But it still seems remarkably narrow. We can put it this way: according to this conception of human development our concern ought to be with human lives as projects, but only with human lives. Arguably however, human lives will go better, if we are concerned with other projects as well, including long term projects with a long past (a past much longer than any human lives), and a long possible future (a future much longer than any human life). This suggests a more inclusive civic conception of development.

### *The Modern World as a Venue of Civic Work*

We could think of the discipline of civic studies as part of the global movement of civic renewal. What is this movement? The words need not refer to a renewal of civicness, a return to a more civically glorious past. It is not clear that there was such a past anywhere. And in certain large parts of the

world, there was certainly no such past. The phrase is best understood as referring not to a renewal of civicness, but to renewal in civic form. Renewal of what? Of modernity, of the world, of Egypt, of your city and neighborhood. The list can be very long.

What makes the renewal civic? The work is broadly shared, it is composed of countless initiatives. It is like the Arab awakening, like the color revolutions, like 1989. But it is also like the more routine civic efforts for neighborhood renewal, for example, all invoking a spirit of shared responsibility, and all constituting a minor miracle: the entrenched people, patterns of behavior and institutions are suddenly overturned, the apathetic spectators suddenly find themselves motivated to do what they would not do moments earlier. Large numbers of people suddenly share in the creation of their world. And this can add up. In the end it could well become a global renaissance creating a global civic society, so that the whole modern world can be taken as a venue of civic work.

### *Forms of Co-Creation*

The promise of civic studies lies in the potential of the idea of co-creation. Shared creation is not design alone. It is rather shared and continuing design, but also shared and continuing implementation. It is not deliberation alone, although deliberation helps improve design and creation. It is not just talk, it is a process of changing the world. As the Great Master said: "Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it."<sup>25</sup> And, finally, it is not problem solving alone: not every shared *project* consists of a problem to be solved. The basic unit of creation (its atom, so to say) is the *project*. And the basic unit of co-creation is a shared project contained within human interaction, developing within a system of mutual influencing.

Among the different forms of co-creation we find three prominent types. The first is collegial co-creation by equals. This form is the favorite of radical democrats, combining equal participation and deliberation. Civic studies obviously has room for those who elaborate the ideals of deliberative, participatory and radical democracy; and for those who promote them. But it also has room for others, whose interest lies in different forms of co-creation, or in a fuller variety of those forms.

The second type of co-creation is a partnership of creation from above with creation from below. This form is the favorite of enthusiasts of corporate social responsibility and of "new collaborative governance," based

on partnerships with multiple stakeholders. It is also the form found in traditional collective bargaining in unionized firms, and in negotiated transitions to democracy via Round Table Agreements between representatives of the Regime and representatives of Society. One can (almost) imagine a global version with a team from the World Economic Forum in Davos negotiating (from above) with a team from the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre (or wherever the WSF might now be found).

A more generic version of this type of co-creation is found in all settings where the relevant professionals do their creative work in partnership with stake-holding amateurs. To support such procedures civic studies can operate on two educational fronts. Providing education to the professionals, the specialized social architects (the lawyers, managers, planners, public policy professionals), it teaches them how to be co-creators with the non-professionals, how the project of law, for example, can be reformulated in order to be shared with those whose work of co-creation is done outside the courts. And providing education for citizens, it teaches them how to be co-creators with the professionals. Most generally we work to elaborate a process of creation in which insiders and outsiders, those at the top looking down, and those at the bottom looking up, can become partners.

Finally, the third prominent type of co-creation is *polycentric*. We can distinguish two dimensions of polycentric creation: across social space and across time. Across social space we have multiple initiatives, civic, governmental, or entrepreneurial depending on the coordinating mechanism to which we subject them. In part, we coordinate these projects through mutual adjustments, or (to put it another way) we coordinate them by creating boundaries between them. These boundaries are themselves *projects*. In doing this we combine the art and science of association with the equally important art and science of *separation*.<sup>26</sup> But we also coordinate these projects in part through more encompassing projects, which restrict but do not eliminate the autonomy of the projects they coordinate. In this case we have hierarchies of projects, but the encompassing or master projects allow a degree of independent development to their component projects. So projects can have various degrees of federal structure, so to speak.

Projects also develop over time, they are—if you like—polycentric over time. A mono-centric division of labor over time takes the form of early design in which most creative effort is concentrated in the author (the literary author who creates a text, the architect or engineer who creates a plan or a blueprint, the legislature which produces a statute). This is followed by the far less creative implementation, or interpretation. A polycentric alternative

spreads the creative effort more evenly across time. It takes the form of an ongoing project, such as a scientific research program, for example. If it is a shared project you can think of it as a form of creative social capital. Like all capital it is a stock that produces a valuable flow. In this case, it is a distinctive stock of shared ideas that produces a valuable flow of continuing creation.

Processes of co-creation can also be arranged on a rough continuum from what we might call social artisanship to social architecture. Civic co-creation can be the work of social craftsmen and artisans, or it can be the work of social architects. It can be in various degrees self-conscious and theory driven. Craftsmen learn by doing, and by attempting to copy the actions of their teachers. Social architects learn also a systematic body of knowledge. Certain kinds of practice in creation, or in simulated creation, can develop in students a “bias for action,” including a confidence in one’s capacities and competence. This is the education of civic artisans. But a justified confidence in one’s capacities can also be build up by the mastery of theoretical knowledge. Knowledge of theory cannot replace learning by doing, but it can add to it, giving us an enhanced capacity to create and co-create.

Citizens as co-creators of their worlds can be social architects. Their education can be modeled in part on the education of other social architects. To promote human agency we need to create in students *a bias for action*, and that has been the goal of the case study approach in the Harvard Business School model.<sup>27</sup> Contemporary social sciences by contrast create a bias against action: they undermine hope, they see what happens as only a product of external causes, and so on.

Social architects have a dual perspective: more like professionals, and less like artisans. They know the particular, and are engaged in creating the particular. But they also know general principles relevant to a broad range of cases. They are not captured within a strict division of labor, in which everyone’s competence lies in the mastery of a narrow task, and only those at the top of the hierarchy (the leaders) have the general perspective. Rather social architects operate within a softer division of labor, in which everyone has some knowledge in depth and some knowledge in breadth. The broad and general skills of leadership are available to all, at least in an elementary form.

The more self-conscious, more fully articulate and theory-driven, forms of shared creation can be seen themselves as a long term project, slowly emerging in stages from a starting point that we can take to be a process of blind (spontaneous) evolution. We began from evolution by random trial

and error. From there it was a relatively short step to incremental creation: dominated by small and short-term projects. By chance some of those projects can actually add up over time. But large-scale creation over the long term is better served if we first invest in the building of creative social capital, and then allow that capital to help create a flow of innovations that build on each other. To learning by doing we then add other processes of learning: learning by simulated doing, learning from exemplars of success, and learning the principles and ideas of a project, or the principles and ideas of project development in general.

Certain kinds of professionals (lawyers, planners, business managers, public policy specialists) are exemplars of one kind of social architects. But really only a few in those professions actually practice social architecture. It would be perhaps better to say that leaders are social architects. And the educational task of civic studies is to develop the skills of leadership and shared leadership. Leaders are those capable of taking initiative, and willing to do so. And a civic form of leadership is shared leadership, with the relevant knowledge, principles, skills and motivations made available as broadly as possible.

But civic studies is not a study of leadership. Its task, I would argue, is to study projects. It is to study projects in a way that is helpful to them, that articulates and develops their potential. We codify projects in a way that helps us to understand them and promote them. We develop and test both supportive hypotheses and case studies. Leadership can then be seen as

the capacity to discover, articulate, create and put to use this shared creative capital. But it is the shared capital, the system of ideas that constitutes this capital, that we need to articulate and codify if we are to develop a civic science.

What would such a system of ideas look like? Let me elaborate on the didactic slogan we use in our Summer Institute: Facts, Values, Strategies. It would contain, I suggest, a code of principles to guide our actions. This code might be combined with supportive hypotheses about the way the world is (*facts*). It would be based on a commitment to *values*, which we take seriously, and articulate rigorously. We search for ways to justify those values, and to test their quality. In addition, a project will not likely develop successfully without *strategic intelligence*, and more generally without a system of skills and of institutions that help overcome the difficulties and

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impediments that the project faces. It would contain also descriptions of the project's past successes, and of ongoing ones. These would serve to inspire and to teach. It would contain, finally, whatever else makes the project more attractive and helps it develop.

How is the codification of a project different from a plan or a design? Its goal is to stimulate further creation. The plan or design by contrast is for the most part the end of the real creative process, to be followed by more routine implementation, or more routine interpretation of the existing design, or the existing plan, or the existing text. One example is a scientific research program: normal science following such a program is not simple implementation, it is more like creative puzzle solving.

## A Way of Looking at the World

When novices will arrive at the gates of civic studies, what will we tell them? We will tell them, I suggest, to look at the world, and at its history, in a new way. See a world full of projects—some quite ancient, others recent—and full of potential projects. See them not in the way a spectator might, but as someone eager to take part in the great task of shared creation, and of developing ideas that support that task. See a world in which outcomes are not distinguished by their probability, as a spectator might, but by their difficulty. See a world in which at least a significant number of constraints we face are not causal determinants but impediments, and we can build instruments that help us to diminish, weaken and sometimes overcome those impediments.

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## NOTES

1. I would like to thank the participants in the 2009 and 2010 Summer Institutes of Civic Studies, especially Peter Levine, many of whose ideas have by now blended with my own.
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