

EVERYDAY MAKERS AND EXPERT CITIZENS

Building Political not Social Capital

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1 draft

"Since the elitist myth of the governing class seeks to eliminate the people in connection with the destiny of society, this myth explodes when it is confronted with the fact that without the people, the rulers are as free spirits wandering lonely, dejected and unemployed in an empty world. But without rulers dominating their existence, the people, on the contrary, find that very freedom that calls forth their most creative efforts. Elitism places blind faith in an appropriate governing class. The democratic ideal incorporates a tempered trust in the wisdom and creative genius of the people" (Easton, 1947:418).

Introduction

All over the Western world we are witnessing an individualization of politics and a decline in the active support and membership of conventional modes of collective political organizing through political parties, interest organizations, new social movements or (big) voluntary associations. Many stories have been written about the decline of civic engagement and the number of politicised individuals. Most stories describe how political participation, as a collective activity, has fallen prey to globalising market forces transforming virtuous citizens, dedicated to the public life of the Republic, into atomised individuals, exploiting the state as a means to realize their own personal life plans and life styles (Braitwaite and Levis, 1998, Mouffe, 2000, Putnam, 1995). Democratic governance, it is said, is undermined by consumer politics and other market driven oddities such as 'spin' politics and celebrity politics (Bennett and Entman 2001), making concessions to the market view of citizens as self-interested consumers and customers, who will punish government, if it does not deliver the goods that they need when striving for 'self-realization.' In politics, we are witnessing a profound 'thinning' (Barber, 1984) of social and political community, which, to an increasing degree, is atomising the citizenry (Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2004).

The story of atomised citizenship comes in two versions. One is Putnam's by now

almost classical narrative about the undermining of social capital in the US. Putnam speaks about a “mysterious disengagement” which has “afflicted all echelons of our society” (Putnam, 1995: 668). He sees a serious “downward trend in joining, trusting, voting, and newspaper reading”. Social networking is in the process of being replaced by individuals who “bowl alone” (Putnam, 1995: 674). The putative consequences of this development are many. Democracy is threatened by a situation where: “[d]efection, distrust, shirking, exploitation, isolation, disorder, and stagnation intensify one another in a suffocating miasma of vicious circles” (Putnam, 1993: 177). A decline in collective political involvements in state affairs will “powerfully affect the prospects for effective, responsive government” (Putnam, 1993: 16). Weaker civic engagement in civil society leads to weaker governments that are less effective and less responsive than they would otherwise have been. All in all, in Putnam’s framework, we witness an era of Great Decay of both social and political trust and in normative commitment to sharing in collective concerns. We also see a direct fall in social engagement and political participation (cf. Boggs, 1997).

However, there is a more optimistic version of the story of atomised citizenship, which is created in the aftermath of the social capital debate and is influenced by new studies of civic engagement and political participation. This version does not identify politics solely with what is going on in, or is directed at, democratic government, nor does it focus exclusively on orientations and activities, which are oppositional and antagonistic to ‘the system’. Such authors consider Putnam wrong in his description of individualised politics as involving a decline in political interest and involvement as such. In this vein Norris et al identifies: “a growing channel of political expression used for the legitimate articulation of demands in a democratic state, and a form of activism that has evolved and expanded over the years to supplement and complement existing organizations in civil society” (Norris, Walgrave and Van Aelst, 2004b: 20, cf. Norris. 2004a). Similarly, Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley (2004) point to new modes of: “micro-political participation [as] actions designed to influence indirect agents of the state in the day-to-day world. For parents it means trying to influence their children’s influence in the school, for patients it means trying to influence their medical treatment, or for the employed it means trying to influence their working conditions. Given that the state is becoming less and less a direct service provider and more of an overseer and regulator, this is an aspect of politics which is growing in importance” (*Ibid*).

Yet, even though many today would disagree with Putnam’s description of a decline in participation, most would still agree that individuals have become increasingly atomised and that the many new forms of political participation within, below or above the state bear witness to this

tendency. The notion of the virtuous citizen as one who is committed to normative social solidarity still looms large in most participatory and deliberative approaches worried about the ongoing marketisation or individualization of people in civil society. It seems to carry two basic presumptions: (1) citizen participation is about collective actions influencing strategic decision and action of rational actors in the state (politicians, administrators, interest groups, etc.); (2) citizen identity is essentially about the creation of strong, affective moral ties, committing citizens to act normatively responsibly and in the name of the common good.

Given these assumptions the problem that atomised citizenship raises for democracy seems, above all, to be one of free riding on the collective efforts of associated individuals to solve common concerns. As Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley (2004) put it:

“The core problem to be addressed by a theory of citizenship is to explain why a group of people are willing to cooperate with each other to solve common problems when there are real incentives not to do so and to free-ride on the efforts of others”
(2004: 24)

As we shall see, I do not doubt that the free riding, which must result if the gap between individual reason (preferences) and social morality (norms) becomes too big, is an important problem requiring serious consideration, especially in our increasingly individualized times. Yet, I will challenge the argument that the individualization of politics and policy can lead *only* to an atomisation of individuals and that free riding is therefore *the* core problem of democracy and *the* key to understanding and explaining new forms of political participation and identity today. First, I do not believe that there is any *one* core problem of democracy, since democracy is, by its very nature, an essentially contested term. Processes of pluralisation and democratisation will continuously create new challenges and dilemmas for democracy that require new solutions, new concepts, and new ways of looking at things(Connolly, 1991, 1995, 1999, Gunnell, 1998). Secondly, the heart of participating in a democratic, political division of labour do not involve the matching of preferences and norms by being ‘strong’ in exercising influence over others and in one’s moral and social integrity. It is rather the matching of political power and values in the situated interaction between political authorities and laypeople through which a political system is structured in time-space (Bang, Hoff and Hansen 2000, Etzioni-Halevy, 1993, Heffen, Kickert and Thomassen, 2000, Hutton and Giddens, 2001). A democratic political relationship of authority, I will suggest, is one where everybody has the right and possibility to make a difference to the constitution of politics and policy. This kind of political solidarity is distinct from social solidarity,

since it does not rely on any kind of normative agreement on a common good. It may well exist where there is a normative conflict between various comprehensive doctrines, since all that it requires to qualify as a political solidarity is that each and everybody in a political authority relationship hold the general political value that democracy requires the mutual acceptance and recognition of difference (Bang and Dyrberg, 2001, Rawls, 1993).

From the viewpoint of political solidarity, the crucial problem of contemporary politics and policy is not free riding but rather political exclusion, in denial of the right to and the possibility for people to exercise their differences equally. Such political exclusion leads to an uncoupling of political authorities from laypeople and, consequently, to an undermining of political capital - in the form of both trust in political institutions and the right and ability of everybody to be able to exercise their difference in a democratic political community. What we witness today, I argue, is an increasing exclusion of, particularly, the ‘weakest’ and most vulnerable individuals and groups at all levels, from the local to the global (Etzioni-Halevy, 1999). Governments, states, governance networks and political communities should therefore concentrate on not only stopping free riding but also overcoming such exclusions, which hinder people from enjoying their rights and practicing their freedoms (Benhabib, 1996).

I will make an outline of a new approach to participation, which grounds the socioeconomic problem of free riding in the sociopolitical problem of uncoupling. The latter derives from the political fact that political authorities cannot make and implement authoritative decisions for a society unless laypeople accept them and recognize themselves as bounded by them. After elaborating briefly on this difference, I shall present my new approach in the context of our findings in the Danish research project “Democracy from Below” (Bang, Hansen and Hoff, 2000). I shall first elaborate on the problem of free riding by reference to the Danish version of ‘strong’ democracy or republicanism. Danish citizens are very concerned with this problem and they know from their democratic traditions that the kind of social capital inherent in normative integration is easier to dissolve than to build up. However, Danes are even more worried over their political sovereignty and power as laypeople. Hence, the problem of uncoupling of political elites from political non-elites is considered even more important if Danes are to protect and develop the democratic life of the republic (which is somewhat ironically a kingdom). What we also will see is that, whenever there is a coupling problem, the path dependencies in Danish political culture begin to search out new avenues for re-coupling to secure the balancing of the relations of power and dependence between ‘strong’ leadership and ‘strong’ citizenship, which conventionally has

characterized Danish republicanism. This will bring me to introduce two new political identities, expert citizens (hereafter ECs) and everyday makers (hereafter EMs), that we first discovered in our qualitative pilot project for the “Democracy from Below” project (Bang and Sorensen, 1997), and which later was systematized more on the ground of our findings from our national survey and 250 subsequent qualitative interviews.

Both ECs and EMs break with the old participatory models, distinguishing between an active and passive citizenship (Turner 1990), which are seen as either legitimating or oppositional in their functioning (Castells, 1997). ECs and EMs do not have a legitimating or oppositional identity but instead a common project oriented one (*ibid*). Furthermore, they do not address their participation specifically towards the state, as either state driven or civil society driven, but rather engage in the building and running of governance networks and reflexive political communities, whether as full time (ECs) or part time (EMs) participants. The profiles of ECs and EMs indicate that something may need revision in Putnam’s view of civic engagement as “vibrant networks and norms of civic engagement” (1993: 15), which manifest “forms of organized but voluntary social solidarity” (*ibid.* 140). Today, these ‘vibrations’ and norms often show the participation of voluntary organizations as ECs in a variety of administratively-initiated partnerships, teams and projects (Bang, 2003). Social struggle for solidarity and against ‘the system’ thus hits the collaborating voluntary organizations in various elite networks as hard as in the past it hit their old ‘enemies’ from the state.

EMs may be regarded as a response to this shift of full time activism from ‘amateur’ grassroots to ‘professional’ ECs. They distinguish their lay-activities from the ways things are done by various ‘experts’ from public, private and voluntary organizations who they meet on their way through various local institutions, partnerships and networks. ECs, EMs can see, engage in strategic communication, using all the wonderful words of the democratic traditions – freedom, equality, deliberation, dialogue, undistorted communication, etc. – but utilising them all in a systematic quest for democratic effectiveness. Voluntary organizations are developing elite attitudes and EMs respond to this challenge by inventing a variety of ‘small’ everyday tactics and narratives about how one can make a political difference as an ‘ordinary’ political citizen (Bang and Soerensen, 2001). Voluntary organizations are becoming parts of the system, which means that we need an alternative notion of political capital to unfold the narratives of identity politics or life-politics inherent to the various projects in which EMs engage (Currie, 1998).

The problem of uncoupling

Laypeople, even in their most ‘strong’ and self-reliant versions, are in growing numbers excluded from partaking, even indirectly, in the constitution of effective politics and policy within the formal spheres of parliament and corporatism. Many factors contribute to this uncoupling, such as globalization, the decline of Parliament, the growth of expert systems and the growth in policy and issue networks. However, a key contributing factor is also the very mediatisation and professionalisation of political participation that we witness today with the interlocking of media and NGOs with government, politicians and administrators in the new discursive arenas of governance networks operating within and beyond the state (Bennett and Entman, 2001, Hirst, 1996). These put increasing pressures on the ‘old’, nationally grounded, arenas of parliamentary and corporatist interests in the state, by *not* having their foundation in the ‘blood and earth’ of the nation or in the interests of ‘the people.’ Rather, they manifest new modes of strategic communication between elites and sub-elites, which have no Parliaments or ‘rock bottom’ institutions to dwell in, but which circulate relatively freely around between, above and below states.

Democratic publics are becoming the domain of the systematic articulations of ECs forming new great narratives about phenomena such as ‘Globalization’, ‘The War at Terror’ and ‘The Third Way’, which are not anchored in socioeconomic interests or in the national culture. Rather, they identify a third discursive scene between the parliamentary and the corporatist one, which is emerging to deal with the tension between the ongoing pluralisation of agendas and publics necessary to address the issues and concerns of ‘high modern’ life and the imperative for mediating and channeling this plurality of forces and interests discursively in order to enable effective public action (cf. Barnett, 2003: 37).

The new discursive arenas of EC dissolve the old opposition between state and individual, or state and civil society, because they are, by their very nature, both rational and cooperative, in being driven by political concerns for effectively partnering and communicating across old boundaries. ECs attempt to construct class, ethnic, racial, gender or sexual identities through their political deployment of images and narratives. They break with the view that these categories are external to the political and in some ways ‘unmediatable.’ ECs do not believe in universal entities such as ‘the state’ or ‘the people,’ but accept and recognize representation functions through communication, debate and deliberation as a medium for the making of identities. However, in the same fashion as they include ever more ECs into their circulating elite networks of knowledge and power, they also exclude anybody on their way, who cannot, will not, or do not

understand how to assert themselves as ‘strong’ citizens, who possess the relevant expertise and capabilities to engage with others in governance networks for the remaking of identities.

So the situation, as I see it, is as follows. The more ‘global’ and ‘regional’ they are in their orientations, the higher the probability that national governments, political parties and other organized interests in the state’s parliamentary and corporatist arenas will uncouple themselves from the everyday concerns of laypeople – crime, street violence, race tensions in schools, pollution, contaminated food, waiting lists on hospitals, etc. The advent of ECs merely reinforce this uncoupling of political elites from laypeople or of expert systems from ‘lifeworlds.’ The more ECs, and the more willing ECs become to cooperate with each other and more established top elites, the greater the likelihood that ECs will exclude laypeople from the discursive construction of new publics and modes of democratic governance.

However, if we agree that there could be no political authorities or elites without laypeople to set the problems that elites are called upon to solve (cf. Easton’s quotation above), then we have to admit that Western political systems are experiencing a serious coupling problem, which in the long run may threaten not only their legitimacy but also their ability to handle complexity with complexity (for example, by involving ever more laypeople in their rule). If government and the state are ‘going global’ (or regional), and the citizenry itself is either becoming atomised or transforming into expert citizens, then what about the democratic ideal of public authority as a protector and facilitator of an autonomous, non-coerced popular public sphere, where expert knowledge has no privileged place, and where citizens participate in, and deliberate over, common concerns? Is this sphere, as the elitists have always maintained, just a utopian fiction, revealing no more than how: “masses respond to the ideas and actions of elites. When elites abandon democratic principles, or the masses lose confidence in elites, democracy is in peril” (Dye and Ziegler, 1997:157). Or can we, by focusing on the day-to-day experiences and actions of laypeople, find political spaces of potential public relevance, which refute the elitist hypothesis as one-sided and as neglecting the necessary role of lay-people in any authority relationship? (cf. Marsh et al 2003a+b)

I cannot of course in any way answer this huge question of coupling here. What I can do is to describe, first, how the coupling problem relates to free riding, and, then, how the political difference between ECs and EMs is highlighted by the very functioning of democratic political authority relationships, as requiring both the systematic articulation and organization of politics and policy, and the creative knowledge and action of laypeople. These laypeople cannot be programmed to engage in systematic organizing, but are ‘free’ to discuss, deliberate on and experiment with new

democratic values, new modes of political participation and new images about how democratic politics and policy could be performed, which are beyond the hegemony of the ‘living constitution.’

The advent of EC, I shall suggest, indicates that the conventional governing models of hierarchy (‘state’), solidarity (‘civil society’) and ‘anarchy’ (‘market’) because of increased connections between individuals, communities and institutions within and beyond the nation state, are no longer sufficient to provide political systems with the wholeness, coherence and efficiency that they need (Bang, 2003). What is needed is discursive cooperation and networking across old boundaries for the sake of negotiating common concerns in the light of a common democratic imagination. The emergence of EM may be regarded as both the response and the challenge to this new demoelitist rule (Etzioni-Halevy, 1993). An EM is a strong, self-relying and capable individual, who conceives of politics and policy as the concrete and direct handling of diversity, difference and dispute concerning life political problems; who consider commonality as pressing solutions of common concerns (political community), more than the pursuit of the common good (social community); and who accept and recognize ‘the fact of pluralism’ (Bang and Soerensen, 2001c, Rawls, 1993). But, EMs are not in the political for strategic reasons, which is otherwise how politics and policy is mostly defined – as a struggle between rational actors over influencing the political regime and its outcomes. EMs participate in politics and policy simply to feel involved in things, to make use of expert knowledge when embodying it in concrete action. They avoid the regime to enter participating and practicing their freedoms in reflexive communities, which operate on their own conditions and produce their own particular outcomes. They want to discuss new ideas and play with their own democratic imaginations, not to submit themselves to processes of empowerment provided by ECs, which are constructed exclusively to acquire effectiveness in the elite negotiation of common concerns.

EMs’ lay-activities are self-referential, but at the same time much more fluid, opaque, non-planned and impulsive than are the strategic communication of ECs. EMs demonstrate how lay-knowledge (as distinct from expert rationality) is embodied in activities, and not so much in reflecting on doing. For EMs doing is, at the same time, knowing (Beck, 1994, Bauman, 2001, cf. Lash, 2002: 17). EMs do not separate knowledge and practice which is why they insist on deciding themselves where to ‘hit’ and when to ‘run’, when they feel the need or the desire to do so, whether alone or in cooperation with others. ECs together with established elites from the parliamentary and corporatist arenas should appreciate EMs as not only a threat to their political and social autonomy and solidarity (the free riding problem), but also as a political capital which can be drawn upon to

forge new, more viable and balanced relations of autonomy and dependence between political authorities and laypeople.

Danish Republicanism

Danish democracy comes close to what is termed republicanism, because in Danish political practice there has traditionally been a continuous tension and cooperation between a ‘strong’ hegemonic leadership and a ‘strong’ popular political culture exercising self-governance and co-governance from below. There are many historical reasons for Danish republicanism. First, the Absolutist kings needed to empower ordinary people in order to help them in controlling the nobility. Second, there is the strong influence of the Danish priest Grundtvig (1783-1872), whose idea of democracy (and religion) as tied to everyday experiences and actions with ‘the living word’ became constitutive of both the peasants’ co-op movements and the folk high schools, where peasants, and later workers, could be educated as enlightened and virtuous citizens. Briefly, Danish republicanism can be described as based on Grundtvig’s presumptions that to be a Danish citizen is to:

- feel obliged to keep oneself sufficiently informed about ‘big’ politics
- engage oneself in the solving of the nation’s common concerns
- display tolerance towards the views of others, in particular minorities
- obey public laws and decrees
- show solidarity with those worse off (cf. Andersen (ed), 1994:31).

Considering all the tales about the decay of democracy, we were a bit surprised to discover how firm a grip Grundtvig still holds on the Danish population:

Table 1: Commitment to Danish Republicanism (%)

	Authorities ought to treat all citizens equally	Citizens ought to show solidarity towards those who are worse of	Citizens ought to be open towards the opinions of others	Citizens ought to follow laws and decrees	Citizens ought to take responsibility for solving society's common concerns
very important	86	61	64	80	62
2	10	26	29	16	31
3	2	8	4	2	4
not that important	1	3	2	1	1
don't know	1	2	1	1	2
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The figures seem to speak for themselves. Only 1-3% of the Danish voters show no concerns for the 5 republican values above and between 61% and 86% of them consider each of them *very* important. These results cannot simply be due to the ‘flag-waving’ nature of our questions, since, for example, the ‘flag-waving’ for comprehensive social solidarity would probably have promoted a big question mark or a good laugh in many other political cultures. Indeed, these norms are, not in their entirety, a conventional part of national political culture in many other countries.

Danes do not care very much for parties (Andersen, Andersen and Torpe, 2000), but they do care about solidarity and the other 4 basic democratic norms. In fact, they care very much. This also came out in the questions where we ask how they think things really are with regard to the 5 norms. Actually, many Danes think there is something rotten in the state of Denmark:

Table 2: The Decline of Republican Norms (%)

Have the opinion that: To a:	Citizens show tolerance towards minorities	Citizens show solidarity towards those badly off	Citizens are open towards the opinions of others	Citizens comply with laws and decrees	Citizens feel responsibility for solving common concerns
very small extent	18	20	11	8	13
2	37	38	37	27	36
3	30	28	37	43	34
very high extent	11	12	13	20	14
don't know	4	2	2	2	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Danish citizens are not at all satisfied with themselves as virtuous citizens. We are not at all as good as we should be, especially towards minorities and towards those who are badly off. About 55% of the Danes see citizens as showing a lack of tolerance and solidarity when it comes to allowing, especially poor, ‘first generation’ Danes into their community. In a way, this indicates the close relation between citizen and nation that many multi-culturalists tend to neglect. The integrative norms of the nation state tend to exclude ‘foreigners’, since, as Hannah Arendt noted many years ago: “A citizen is by definition a citizen among citizens of a country among countries” (1973: 84).

From Free Riding to Uncoupling

The Tables above do indicate that Danish citizens can make a ‘is’-‘ought’ distinction and it is also notable that in our subsequent qualitative interviews, we were continuously told that the intolerant in Table 2 should be attributed to other Danes, and not the interviewees themselves.....However, although the free riding problem is of real concern to Danish citizen, they are nevertheless much more worried about the constraining of their self-governing and co-governing powers by political ‘experts’ operating within and beyond the state. When we shift the glance from the relation between preferences and norms to the one between power and values, then the problem of exclusion and uncoupling occurs as a more imminent threat to Danish citizens’ traditional rooting of equality and

freedom in notions of political community, ethical life and practice. They severely criticize their political leaders for not listening to them and not providing them with the knowledge they need to exercise their political autonomy and solidarity:

Table 3: The Incongruence Between What Politicians Say and Do (%)

	Politicians ought to listen before they make decisions	Citizens ought to be informed about important matters in society		Politicians listen before they make decisions	Citizens receive relevant information about important matters
very important	77	59	Very big confidence	4	5
2	17	34	Rather big confidence	22	23
3	4	5	Rather little confidence	40	41
not that important	1	1	Very little confidence	23	22
don't know	1	1	No confidence at all	10	7
			Don't know	1	2
	100%	100%		100%	100%

95% of the Danes consider it important or very important that their politicians listen to them before they make their decisions and only 26% of them are highly or quite confident that they do so. 92% of the Danes think it is important or very important to be informed about society's common concerns, but only 29% of them are highly confident or quite confident that they get the relevant information. This coupling problem in Danish political culture is evidently connected with the tendencies of political elites to look to the EU or the global and criticize citizens for being nationalists, racists and free riders and for not understanding what is required of them in the new

globalized information society in the EU. In the Danish political community, such criticism is taken as a sign that politicians and other organizational experts have forgotten what it means to *be* a Danish republican citizen. They perceive the increasing elite collaboration across old boundaries as evidence of that politicians have lost their conventional predisposition to listen and learn from the living experiences of ordinary citizens in their democratic political culture.

A proportion of the Danish citizens *are* very nationalist and many support the critique of ‘foreigners’ by populist counter elites. But, perhaps the established elites are also to blame for this, because they have failed to inform citizens about how to make use of their republican traditions in a new political world in which there is a rapidly growing demand for thinking and acting in terms of difference as well as in terms of community. There is a tendency among established elites to make concession to neo-populism instead of listening to, and learning from, the other half of Danish political culture, which exercise new kinds of reflexive political community, in which most recognize that political solidarity comes from the mutual acceptance of difference. When the problem of uncoupling is addressed today, especially by politicians and the media, one gets the impression that the popular political world has not changed one iota, and that what is required to contain the threats of populism is simply a strong, hegemonic leadership to control the irrational masses and shape their identities into those of consenting citizens. What is overlooked is that many laypeople are no longer what they used to be, but have become increasingly reflexive and pursue a politics of choice and becoming, according to which: “Difference is a politics leaving a third space, a space reducible neither to subject nor object, universal nor particular – a space open to the radical alterity of the other” (Lash, 2002: 94):

Table 4: Four Kinds of Politics in Danish Democracy:

	<i>Based on Elite Expertise</i>	<i>Based on Conventional Knowledge</i>
Representative Democracy	Systems supporting parliamentary and corporatist elites + followers in the citizenry (politics of ideas or interest politics)	Systems critical neo-populist counter elites + followers in the citizenry (politics of presence)
Discourse Democracy	ECs in governance networks of strategic communication (negotiated politics)	EMs in reflexive political communities of conventional communication (politics of becoming)

Table 4 presents what becomes apparent when we the problem of free riding is connected with the problem of uncoupling. Four different kinds of politics emerge with clear tensions between them. However, both the established, systems supporting elites and their followers and the neo-populist, counter elites and their followers tend to present democracy as equal to representative democracy, writing off the discourse democracy in which they also do participate as a ‘deviance’ undermining their democratic government (‘celebrity politics’, ‘mediatised politics’, ‘reality shows politics’, etc. cf. Bennett and Entman, 2001).

For established elite democracy is about elites debating over abstract ideas in the parliamentary arena and bargaining with conflicting interests in the corporatist one. Thus, they do not notice, that for the systems critical neo-populists and their followers, democracy is all about being present in the natural community and defending its particular, conventional, Danish norms and values (Philips, 1999). Their criticism of ‘the system’ does not relate to ideology and bargaining on the left-right axis, but the arrogance of established elites and their disrespect of Danish popular political culture. Most nationalist citizens do want to be represented, but at close range and with a view to their particularities, which is why they see the established elites’ wish to assert themselves in EU and global governance networks as a betrayal of *Danish* democracy. ECs and EMs, on the other hand, cannot really relate to the systems politics of ideas and bargaining between interests or the anti-systems politics of presence. They are much more committed to communicating and cooperating directly in flatly organized networks and reflexive communities. However, whereas ECs negotiate to acquire influence and success in strategic communication, EMs want to decide what to do themselves and are, as such, much more close to what Connolly defines as a *micropolitics of becoming*, which: ‘*prizes the ineliminable plurality of contestable perspectives in public life and the recurrent need to form collective assemblages of common action from this diversity*’ (Connolly 1999: 12, cf. Certeaux, 1984, 1997).

I shall not expand this discussion of these various forms of politics, but instead concentrate, first, on how the analysis of such a fourfold politics requires a new approach to political participation and, second, on how this new approach can be adopted to provide an outline of the new forms political participation represented by ECs and EMs.

Old and New Models of Participation

Let me go back to the beginning where I argued that the coupling problem is more political and democratic in nature than the problem of free riding, which to me is more social and philosophical.

Democracy, I will argue, relies on two kinds of participation. One can either enter into *strategic communication* with, or as, a political authority in order to systematically, and directly influence, articulation, programming, assessing, forecasting, implementing and evaluating politics and policy. Or, one can partake in the *conventional communication* between laypeople in order to feel engaged, discuss values and deliberate on what has to be done when building new communities or publics. Political capital, I will suggest, comes from both of these dimensions, either (a) in the shape of public institutions and governance networks, enjoying widespread trust from both elites and laypeople that they can cope effectively and appropriately, directly with the making and implementing of authoritative decisions within a given field, domain or territory; or (b) in the shape of reflexive political communities suffused with narratives about the experiences and actions of the democratic traditions as well as by a mutual trust in their capacities for solving common concerns.

One can acquire an indirect influence over politics and policy as a self-reflexive and cooperative layperson, which cannot be pre-programmed to involve systematically in seeking direct influence over rational opponents. Laypeople are called upon to accept and recognize the communicated message of authority articulated by political authorities, not for engaging directly in strategic communication (since they then, by definition, would *be* authorities and not laypeople). However, this is exactly what makes laypeople ‘free’ to be more everyday, indirect, emotional and spontaneous in their conventional communication and therefore less systematic, articulate, programmatic, risk assessing, etc. than is required for participating in the strategic type of communication characteristic of authorities. Laypeople are enabled by the very communicative nature of democratic political authority to experiment with new modes of engagement and cooperation beyond the hegemony of the living constitution. These can acquire political salience and indirect influence, when political authorities are willing to listen and learn from them and incorporate new public values into their strategic decisions and actions. As Habermas puts it:

“The democratic procedure can lead to a rational will-formation only insofar as organized opinion-formation, which leads to accountable decisions within government bodies, remain permeable to the free-floating, values, issues, contributions, and arguments of a surrounding political communication that, as such, cannot be organized as a whole” (1996: 485).

However, the irony is that because Habermas does not possess a notion of systems as loosely coupled discursive networks of strategic decision and action, he actually ends up as regarding the entrance of ECs as new players in strategic communication as the sign of the

emergence of “a European-wide political public sphere in a shared political culture” (1998:153). Now I would not deny the existence in EU of a new arena of a plurality of ‘expert public spheres’, made up of discursive networks of democratic governance, providing new rhetoric, new political values, new policy knowledge, new social movement mobilisation, new political cooperation, etc. I would only reject that this kind of European-wide political public sphere and shared political culture articulated by such loosely coupled European elites and sub-elites is in any way popularly grounded. Rather, it is precisely the domain of the new ECs from media, political parties, government, administration, interest organisations, international organizations, NGOs, etc. and their new forms of strategic communication in which authority is exercised rhetorically and through negotiations rather than morally and hierarchically. As such, they may explain why neo-populists and their followers feel excluded by systems-supporting elites and ECs alike. But, it also indicates that today one must clearly distinguish between expert political participation in government and governance and lay political participation in the constitution of politics and policy in and through the political community.

When Habermas is creating a dilemma for himself and his own early idea of a popular public sphere, I would argue that this is above all, because he derives the notion of virtuous citizens from (Western) constitutions, which are based on norms, and are procedural in the sense that they establish a discursive field for rationally dealing with the tension between economic man and normative society. We do seem to get more and more ECs who are willing to cooperate with one another for solving this common concern. The problem is only that, in their cooperation, they tend to close the door on ordinary citizens, because they do not possess the ‘correct’, professional, discursive qualities to engage in ‘expert deliberation.’ So, what is left outside ‘the political’, by the new discursive arena of elites and sub-elites within and beyond the state, is the ordinary citizen together with the old image of a public sphere, in which political *values* are deliberated, innovated and produced in, and through, the everyday communication of ordinary citizens.

The Old Models of Citizenship

In the conventional conception of citizenship, media and voluntary associations are supposed to be watchdogs, facilitators and midwives of a popular public sphere, where laypeople can cooperate and educate themselves as virtuous citizens. Such citizens, as Dryzek says: “do not take constitutional structure at face value” (2000: 81). They do not have to prove that they can articulate themselves professionally and systematically, in order to be heard and valued. Laypeople do not need be

procedural in their discursive will formation to demonstrate their identity as virtuous citizens. All that is required of them to acquire access to and recognition within a popular public space in the political community is that they accept and recognize that “they must be non-coercive and, second, they must be capable of connecting the particular to the general” (otherwise, there is no appeal across difference, Dryzek 2000:86).

Habermas has difficulties in grasping such a public conception of political cooperation in political communities because his discursive will formation is procedural and not communal. It deals with the norms in terms of which a democratic regime is organized, not with the values in terms of which people engage in and authenticate a common political division of labour, that is, a political community. Habermas simply lacks a notion of political community, since he operates from a state-civil society distinction in which politics and policy are about the organizing of power, whereas community is about establishing an autonomous public sphere and civil society freed from this power. In this model participation can be either active and society-driven or passive and state-driven (cf. Turner, 1990:89), and such participation can connect with a normatively-derived identity which is either legitimating (consenting to state domination) or oppositional (struggling against state domination):

Table 5: Active and Passive Participation

PARTICIPATION IDENTITY	Active (society driven, collective action)	Passive (state driven, individual behavior)
Legitimating	Representation groups	Minimal participants
Oppositional	Grass roots, social movements	Alienated non-participants

I will not argue that table 5 is in any way irrelevant or outdated for studying political participation. Quite the contrary, I consider it very important for dealing with the problem of free riding. In my Danish republicanism, for example, the 5 norms of the strong, normative citizen should indeed be analysed in light of the difference between participating in representation groups, parties, interest organisations, etc., and participating in oppositional groups as a grass root or a social movement activist. Furthermore, the ‘strong’ model should then be confronted with the ‘weak’ model of minimal participants and alienated non-participants in order to assess the extent to which free riding is a result of a transformation of voters into market driven customers and

consumers, creating more alienated non-participants among those worse off.

However, the problem with table 5 is that it springs from a separation of the state from civil society. It hereby conceals how more and more ‘strong’ citizens are abandoning both the legitimating and the oppositional identity in favour of a new project identity for engaging as either rational sub-elites or reflexive laypersons with other political elites or laypeople in and beyond the state and civil society in various networks and communities. This project identity is ethical and differential, more than moral or atomised, and it springs from the use of culture as discursive practices (Newman, 2001).

The Need for a New Participatory Model

Today elites and sub-elites from state, market and civil society are increasingly working together, both locally, nationally, regionally, internationally and globally, to solve common concerns in various joint ventures, partnerships and teams. They engage in various discursive governance networks, articulating and organizing decisions and actions more informally and less hierarchically than is the case when organizing the power of the parliamentary and corporatist arenas. Thus, we need a new participatory model; not only to distinguish the networked participation of ECs, which do not possess a legitimating, or an oppositional, identity, but engage in institutions and networks with a project identity, which works on the background of the common imagination of elites and sub-elites. Above all we need to explore how these new discursive arenas of collaborating elites and sub-elites open for new conceptions of ordinary citizenship beyond civil society and the state (Marsh, 2004a+b).

This brings me to the emerging identity of EM, who dissociate themselves from both the passive and the active kind of citizen in being neither state driven, nor engaged in politics and policy as a fulltime activist or public citizen To be an EM is to be more individualistic, more project oriented, more ‘on’ and ‘off’ and ‘hit’ and ‘run’ in one’s engagement, more pleasure oriented and more fun-seeking, than is usually associated with being civilly engaged. EMs consider the political a realm of presence and becoming, which is as much a part of one’s own individual identity as an ensemble of practices for coping with common problems in the normal run of things (Bang and Dyrberg, 2001d, Certeau, 1997). EMs dissociate themselves from ECs in insisting on being ordinary and being in politics for other reasons than to acquire success or influence. Furthermore, they do not have the same full-time project identity as ECs, because they loathe thinking of political participation as being ‘for life’. EMs are not disinterested in democratic government or in

opposition to it either. But, they do not want to participate actively in it, because they think politics and policy should be something one engages in at close range, on one's own terms, and when one feels the inclination to it or can fit it into all one's other exciting projects of studying, traveling, becoming a parent, etc. EMs consider the institutions and networks that they meet on their way more as features of their everyday life than as properties of government. They do not regard these institutions and networks as either external or coercive state institutions that continuously have to be resisted. Nor do EMs look upon themselves as moral beings with a strong sense of social solidarity. They rather conceive of themselves as political individuals living with, and in, such institutions and networks of political decision and action, conditioning both their self-governance and their empowerment (Bang, 2000).

Among ECs and EMs at Inner Noerrebro

The “Democracy from Below” project (Bang, Hansen and Hoff, 2000) which focuses on changes in political identity and civic engagement in an inner-city neighbourhood (Inner-Noerrebro) in Copenhagen, is the source of most of the data presented in this article. Political decision-making in Copenhagen, as elsewhere in Denmark, is decentralized to local public institutions, enjoying relative autonomy. Voluntary organizations played, and still do play, a central part in the governing of a whole range of areas in the locality: they cooperate closely with institutions, the municipality and various street level authorities in areas such as education, social problem solving, immigrant integration, retraining of the unemployed, infrastructural planning and housing maintenance.

The Inner Noerrebro is by tradition a stronghold of left-wing parties and grassroots movements fighting the system, but, as we shall see, the old kinds of collective and oppositional participation have partly been replaced by a new kind of participation in which:

- the political becomes personal and self-reflexive
- the civil engagement is couched in political networks rather than positioned against a hierarchy,
- participation is over the choice of whether and when one will ‘engage’ in, and ‘disengage’ from a given context,
- the desire and perception of necessity together drive the sense of engagement,
- ethics, personal integrity and mutual confidence become central elements in the democratic life (cf. Rabinow, 1994).

This new form of participation comes in the shape of the two new political identities, which I dealt with earlier, and which I shall study more in detail in the following.

The expert citizen

I will begin by illustrating the profile of expert citizens. They are those who Hirst (1996) describes as the new professionals in voluntary associations, who feel they can do politics and make and implement policies quite as competently as the ‘old’ politicians and the corporatist systems. In Inner Noerrebro, ECs appear as a new sub-elite cooperating in a chronic fashion with elites and subelites from both private and public organizations in the area. This professionalism and cooperative attitude distinguishes ECs from the old grassroots, which draw their political identity from - more than anything else - their antagonistic relationship to the authorities. As a major study from those days phrased it:

“The participants in the grassroots organizations are angry. They feel that they are being stepped on by the authorities ... For a lot of them it is as though the scales are falling from their eyes. Suddenly they see how the system hangs together and that, in reality, the politicians do not maintain the population’s interests. Their level of engagement in the conflict is therefore very high. A sharp distinction between friend and enemy is made, where the friend is the one that contests the foundation of the organization.” (Gundelach, 1980: 13)

However, in the 1990s, growing out of the grassroots organizations themselves a new kind of activist was appearing who began to make a break with the oppositional identity. As one activist notes: “*Things also change. Just like I did twenty years ago.*” As many other activists, Maria, as we shall call her, experiences a decline in her ideological ‘spirit of 68’. She no longer considers public authorities the self-given enemy. In relation to her own contributions to anti-racist struggles for integrating immigrants in light of a comprehensive doctrine of social solidarity, she notes: “*I think things have gone too far.... You can't find another area where there are so many projects working with immigrants and refugees and that kind of thing. And that's what I mean – I think we've been too naïve.*” This self-criticism leads her from her old social solidarity thinking towards a new politics of choice and becoming: “*If you want to do anything today – if you really want to get something done – then it's not enough just to talk politics. The big challenge is to get things done.*”

Maria is thus beginning to experience, or interrogate, events and people less in regard to their logical meaning in her old oppositional identity, than in relation to their existential meaning in the context of an ontology of knowing as doing. As a consequence of this shift towards a new project identity, Maria is beginning to develop a cooperative attitude towards the local authorities, but not a legitimating one. Maria is one of the first examples we met of the appearance of EC. In the

case of Maria, it found its expression in the inclusion of her voluntary work in multiple new issue-networks, policy-communities and ad hoc policy-projects at Inner Noerrebro. Voluntary organizing here becomes a matter of:

- having a wide conception of the political as a discursive construct
- adopting a full-time, overlapping, project identity as one's overall life style
- possessing the necessary expertise for exercising influence in elite networks
- placing negotiation and dialogue before antagonism and opposition
- considering oneself a part of the system rather than external to it

As another former old grass roots activist who we met in a day care institution told us, she had previously had a narrow notion of the political focusing on government and the state, but she was now convinced that being an activist in contemporary society, one had to be regarded as connected with the exercise of political power-knowledge at every level of the social. First of all, it is about being able to articulate what is to be considered as political 'reality' for others:

"I have a very broad definition of politics. Some feel that it is all of the social actions that one is either directly or indirectly involved in. Often - if you choose to do so, in any case – it can have a political angle. That is the perspective I usually assume... because I think politically. I often speak together with people who might not understand what is going on, but if I can give them a political definition of why things appear as they do, then the world suddenly appears differently for them."

Thus, politics for this activist becomes a fusion of representation and participation in a new expert citizenship, where it is necessary to make one's expertise felt upon the conduct of others. She connects this notion of strategic communication, as being able to act successfully upon reforming and utilising individual and collective conduct so that it might be amenable to one's influence, to a new kind of project management identity developed from her various activities. This manifests itself in various networks of negotiation and co-operation with politicians, administrators, interest groups and the media. In a very illustrative manner, this new EC describes the connection between her own voluntary and public life as a leading grassroots, trade union representative, member of a user board, and more in such networks:

"The more I get involved in it, the more I learn about what kind of terrains of competence there are in the different areas. What is this wage agreement stuff? What is the board's competence? What is the competence of the leader? And what is the competence of my colleagues and myself here? Actually I think that it makes it much easier. I am a lot less confused as to how to deal in the different situations."

As an EC, this participant would seem to have developed a form of 'network consciousness' about how in context A she has competence X, while in context B she has competence Y. She also feels

that these couplings between contexts and levels of competency give her a more differentiated and precise image of her own role. But, the new goal of her new role and identity as an EC is no longer social solidarity, but influence. What is of concern to her is no longer fighting the system as a ‘constitutive other’, but rather gaining access to the bargaining processes that go on between public authorities and various experts from private and voluntary organizations. As another former grass root activists told us, today her wish to be able to perform successfully in actual policy takes priority over her old abstract emancipatory ideology:

“You’ve gotta be damned competent if you’re going to be able to make them budge [the local authorities]. You’ve got to be damned good, and you’ve gotta know what you’re talking about before they’re going to take the trouble to talk to you at all.”

The critical potential still exists for the EC, but it has a different directions. The weakening of the antagonism between the political system and society does not mean that antagonism has disappeared. But, the primary element is not, as was the case with the grass roots activists, to oppose ‘the system’ and keep it outside of the sphere of the social. New adversarial images crossing the state-civil society divide are emerging and the criticism of the system becomes geared to making it an effective partner in day-to-day life, rather than an opponent. This is clear in the comments from another EC:

“Actually I think that the municipality could do more. Yes, I think that they could. In relation to the young, in any case. Maybe also in relation to schools - that there should be something more going on. That it did more for integrating immigrants. I live in a place where there are a lot of nationalities. I also think that one misses a little ... one misses the municipality. A visible municipality, actually, in all of this. They become visible the moment there is trouble - then they come out on the street and demonstrate with the rest of us, but I think that from day-to-day they aren’t there.”

No doubt the ECs constitute a resource or political capital for democracy in providing a fund of everyday based experience and action about how to deal systematically with complex problems of exclusion based on race, gender, sick, poor, etc. in the locality. However, the dilemma that ECs constitute for democracy is also obvious. As one of the new ECs phrases it:

“One can achieve democracy only for those who are willing to engage themselves in it. And that is, then, where things will be made to happen, for those who can exercise it, who choose to exercise it. They will have frames within which they can act. For the others there will not be these opportunities.”

One can only become a participant in the EC conception by becoming an EC oneself, someone who possesses the necessary capacities and knowledgeabilities for successfully ruling the waves of new problems and discursive practices in the locality. However, this notion of the EC as the only ‘third way’ is questioned especially by the young generation of participants at Inner Noerrebro. Their response to the ECs shows that politics, when connected to ethical life and

immediate and local forms of reflexive political community, would seem to be a better base for a new systems criticism in terms of new everyday values of political cooperation.

The Everyday Maker: a Response to the Expert Activist

Civic engagement in Inner Noerrebro has become politicised to the extent where the dividing line is no longer between voluntary networks and the coercive state. Instead, there has developed a new difference between ECs and EMs, a division that the new ECs were the first to discover:

"The way I look at it, the young aren't any more egoistic than before. Rather, my experience is that the way you engage yourself and the way in which you show your solidarity are different. I've seen how young people over the course of the last decade organise and involve themselves differently. The fact of the matter is that young people are actually very engaged. The thing is that they are engaged in ways that the older generations consider unconventional. It's often a matter of getting involved in a concrete project, and then engaging oneself 100% in it for a short period, and then they stop. They don't participate in the long-term. People fail to take note of this fact concerning the engagement of young people today. I believe this is why they have a problem in the labour unions: they can't activate the young because the opportunities that they provide to get involved are ongoing – they last forever. And this feeling that 'there's no end to it,' prevents the young people of today from getting involved."

Like the ECs, the EMs do not think ideologically, but concretely. In one EM's words:

"It is too one-dimensional to think of politics in terms of right/left. Actually, I think that many of the ideals on the right concerning freedom are fine – freedom from taking responsibility is OK, I think. But without the sense of solidarity from the left wing, then ... in general no society."

EMs do not feel defined by the state; they do not see themselves as apathetic or opposed to it. They simply do not want to use their precious time on always fighting against the state and for civil society. They prefer to get involved 'on the lowest possible level':

"It's important that you're active where you are; and this is very political. I'm not too crazy about the big lines. In reality, I don't think they're particularly significant."

EMs do typically possess a global, rather than a national, orientation, but they act locally, because they want to do things by themselves, where they are, on their own terms and for their own purposes. Unlike the old grassroots activists, they show no interests in producing a new form of interest representation in advanced industrial democracies (Dalton, et al, 1990: 10). Their interest in party politics is minimal. As one of them states:

"I vote for a party because that's the way the system is set up when I go to the ballot box when there's an election". She considers it "natural to deal with things differently [than party politics]. It's more of a personal thing - I find that I become more engaged and more active when dealing with concrete things."

Like most ECs, EMs are extremely critical of organisational life in political parties. One of

our EM respondents tried it for a short while, but thought that the politicians were too limited in their thinking:

"They praised dogmas rather than ideas. There was no debate. And I think that every tentative effort [to discuss ideas] only generated more of the same.... Generally, I don't like politicians very much. It's too much 'bread-and-butter' to me. It's not because they have an idea, or something – policy they would like to carry out in life."

EMs have not much interest in the grass roots organizations either. As one of them said: "*Earlier I have been involved in a little grassroots work of different kinds, but I stopped at one point. It doesn't interest me that much. I'm too busy.*" Unlike the grassroots activist, this EM saw no point in having an a priori, fierce sense of opposition to state power. She lacks the sense of impossible barriers or walls between her 'life world' and 'the system. She sees: "*Only the ones that I put up myself by doing other things or by choosing differently.*"

However, EMs also reject Hirst's (1996: 167) call for bigger, more professional voluntary organization engaging in partnerships with public authorities. They are very sceptical of the new ECs:

"as soon as we're dealing with bigger associations, then I don't believe [they can sustain their internal democracy]. Associations reveal a tendency to pursue their own politics, and then we have little influence on what it is."

EMs enjoy engaging in politics on the lowest possible level in their local community. One EM we spoke to arranged small outings in her housing estate for softening the tensions between Danes and non-Danes.

"I take care of the making of small concrete arrangements, outings, and an arrangement for young kids in order to get hold of some of those people who we don't see a great deal of otherwise. [And] of course it has something to do with politics, because the problems emerging here are highly [political], because there has never really been anything done to integrate "the bilinguals" [immigrants]. It has something to do with politics in the sense that if we aren't doing something ourselves, then nothing will get done."

The EMs simply do not wish to become Expert Activists. They draw a clear distinction *within* the realm of politics between elite networks and their own politics of the ordinary in the locality. They believe that lay-involvement is valuable in itself as a way to develop oneself as a reflective being having a sense of commonality (Beck et al, 1994). As one of them says:

"I think that I would feel that it was natural to somehow become active when my children start school – one way or the other. I don't know whether it should be in a day-care board or rather in some kind of an assembly of parents. I think it's very important to be active where you are, and that's very political."

EMs are not driven by a sense of duty, as many of the 'old' activists were. Nor do they engage in politics to gain influence, but rather to feel involved and to develop themselves. EMs are not afraid of mixing the more pleasurable and personal with the more serious and societal, as in the

following example where an EM discusses her involvement in voluntary layout work for a local social journal:

"I have tried to choose some things that combined that which I think is fun and that which I think is necessary. For example I chose to get involved with layout work because I feel that it is something I would really like to learn. I think that could be exciting and relevant in relation to my education. And then I chose to get involved with layout the place I did because I think that it was a good magazine. A good cause. So I kind of tried to combine it, you know? And I think that is very good so that you don't become self-righteous and so that you also feel that you get something out of it yourself."

EMs thus challenge the tendency of ECs to place full-scale professional engagement before the nourishing of 'small' political narratives in the locality. She is: "*not one of these full-time grassroots who are always going on weekend trips somewhere to discuss something.*" Sometimes she does not: "*think about anything else but how to cope with the normal run of things.*" Her engagement is of a much more 'roll on – roll off' nature than that of ECs and the grass roots. EMs are sceptical, but not afraid, of expertise, whether voluntary or formal. However, they do not dismiss its utility out of hand. As one of them told us with regard to her involvement in an IT-project with other unemployed architects:

"If we can make it run by ourselves, it would be fine to do it ourselves, wouldn't it? However, if we can't raise enough money, or get it to work properly, I think it would be natural to go to the labour union."

This insistence on the autonomy of one's lay-identity as a citizen often conflicts with the ideas of ECs, who wish to 'mould' it. We experienced this tension between being an EC and an EM in a local day-care board. The EC, who is an employee representative on the user board, is highly sceptical of the board's political relevance: "*At the end of the day, we really don't get to say anything.... somebody from the municipality has already set up the budget. It's peanuts.*" Thus, she merely sees the board as a place where the employees are:

"wiping the shit off on the parents' – the things that nobody else feels like doing. Like if there's something in an institution that's supposed to be renovated or fixed. The parents get to play with those kinds of things. They get the bits, cheap bits, and figure out if the new kitchen is supposed to have green or blue cupboards. That's the kind of thing you can spend a hell of a lot of time and energy working on."

However, what the EC describes as 'wiping the shit off on the parents,' an EM, who is also on the board, but as an ordinary parent, views more positively:

"I regard my position in the board as some kind of back up for the permanent staff. Then it's the leader of the institution, who's also involved in it. It's a kind of co-operation. I don't think she [the leader] would do anything without consulting us as a parental board. Conversely, I don't think we have been misused by any of the parents as a kind of instrument to get at some of the employees. Actually, I think that the co-operation has functioned well.... Well, there is a budget. This we can't touch. The frame is given, and then I also think

that the permanent staff has greater competence ... We're heard and that's OK. I think it's quite all right."

Yet, the EM is somewhat sceptical about the board as a representative institution. He thinks it is too 'expert like' and that it leaves too little room for the construction of a reflexive community among the parents only.

"At least some of us would like to engage in discussions of how we raise our kids. Whether they watch too much TV and such. We'd like to be able to debate these kinds of things together with the other parents. It's not always easy to find a place for such things: and it's sometimes difficult to get parents involved."

Towards a New, More Political Connection between Authorities and Citizens?

Summing up, one can say that the EMs pursue a credo of everyday experience and action, which states that one should:

- **Do it yourself**
- **Do it where you are**
- **Do it for fun, but also because you find it necessary**
- **Do it ad hoc or part-time**
- **Do it concretely, instead of ideologically**
- **Do it self-confidentially and show trust in yourself**
- **Do it with the system, if need be**

Like ECs, EMs do not believe that representative democracy can be rescued, either by strengthening steering from above, or by accumulating more and more social capital from below. Their strategies and tactics of involvement reveal a practical alternative to Putnam's conceptual strategy for combining 'strong government' and 'thick community'. Though they do vote and keep themselves informed about 'high politics', they do not primarily gain their political identities from being citizens of the state or of an autonomous civil society, but from being ordinarily engaged in the construction of networks and locales for the political governance of the social. Both ECs and EMs are much more interested in enhancing their personal and common capacities for self-governance and co-governance, right where they are, than in submitting themselves to an abstract social norm or mode of state citizenship. They prefer a 'thin' form of democratic political community that allows for the reciprocal acceptance and recognition of difference. They also consider 'strong', effective and responsive government from above a permanent threat to their self-governance and co-governance.

What EMs react against is not the state, but the network politics of experts from private, voluntary and public organizations. They do not speak the language of political

effectiveness and social responsibility characteristic of ECs. Their narratives revolve around their day-to-day engagement in ‘small’ politics in their locality. They dissociate themselves from the norms of ‘thick’ solidarity pursued by the ‘old’ left in the 1960s and the ‘new’ social movements in the 1970s. However, they also shy away from being engulfed in the strategic games played by ECs. This new dividing line between lay activists and professional activists in the life world and in voluntary organizations is worth considerable attention.

The advent of EC expresses a *demoelitist ethos* (Etzioni-Halevy, 1993). This makes the rationalized discourses of experts for handling an increasingly complexly negotiated economy a meta-principle of democracy. The argument is that public decision-making no longer relies so much on hierarchical authority as on the capabilities of elites and sub-elites from all sectors of society to justify their discursive strategies in co-operation and dialogue with each other (Pedersen, 1994).

EMs challenge this credo by showing that democracy is not merely a matter of strategic articulation within expert networks. They insist on the irreducibility of their own narratives as conventional modes of co-ordinating lay-involvement in terms of ‘what everyone knows’ about how to ‘go on’ in day-to-day life (Giddens, 1987).

Both EMs and ECs would reject the view that: “Elite and mass attitudes are in fact two sides of a single coin, bound together in a mutually reinforcing equilibrium” (Putnam, 1993:104). They would also reject the idea that politics is a prerogative of ‘strong’ politicians and virtuous citizens. Finally, they would reject the idea that dislocation, disagreement, struggle etc., automatically signify that we are: “cursed with vertically structured politics, a social life of fragmentation and isolation, and a culture of distrust” (*ibid*: 15). Rather, they would insist that: a political culture of trust involves acceptance of profound disagreements and struggle; pluralization necessitates ongoing social fragmentation; and self- and co-governance rely more on political mechanisms of inclusion (and exclusion) than on the overcoming of social isolation. The contours of ECs and EMs in Inner Noerrebro pose some new theoretical and institutional challenges to two old democratic issues related to the political governing of the social: (a) the problem of how to combine concerns for individuality with commonality; and (b) the problem of how to mediate between governing ‘from above’ and governing ‘from below’.

What can then be learned from my small narrative about Inner Noerrebro? I think it might point us in the direction of recognizing and valuing the new discursive arena, which involves not only listening and learning from the everyday experiences and actions of laypeople, but also attempting to involve them more on their own terms in new governance networks and reflexive

political communities. Democratic political elites must feel responsible, not only in relation to their political results, but also in relation to the daily worries of non-elites - in particular with regard to their feeling of lack of possibilities for self-governance and co-governance. This feeling of responsibility must be made visible as a visionary leadership in relation to non-elites. But, this should not be a leadership, which dominates or present itself as a 'know-all'. Rather, it should be one that makes non-elites feel confident in their own skills and possibilities. A governance network, or an institution, can do this by offering possibilities for self-development or resources in different forms to non-elites. However, this demands that elites let go of some control to make room for the micro-politics of, in particular, EMs. Only through such action can the network or the institution demonstrate its spontaneous and renewing behavior.

This image of a 'genuinely' attentive and empowering network or institution is geared to the many new norms and values that are developing under conditions of governance. These place concerns for individuality and networking capacities at the forefront. March & Olsen have in their book "Democratic Governance" (1995) taken a look at the democratic norms and values they think will be valid for governance conditions. They argue that governance networks and institutions should:

- contribute to the development of democratic identities for both citizens, politicians and administrators,
- add to the development of political resources and political competencies for both citizens and other political actors,
- be democratically responsible,
- create possibilities for democratic learning and democratic experiments.

These values, I think, constitute a new set of rules for the democratic interaction between elites and non-elites under conditions of governance. However, they rely on the appearance of new political identities, such as ECs and EMs, in new discursive arenas for negotiating common concerns to be carried out in practice. If this is to succeed, both elites and non-elites must take their various connections and uncouplings much more seriously than is the case today.

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