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**Closing the empowerment gap through citizenship education
How to address educationally disadvantaged groups**

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Keynote

Teaching Civic Education in a World of Radical Inequality, Digital Technology and Global Interdependence

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In this essay, I will raise some questions about the challenges that face civic education in these difficult times. What seems clear is that we cannot continue to do what is so often done today and treat civic education and the arts of liberty as stale classics—an unchanging subject like mathematics—that must be retaught again and again to new generations, but as if the subject matter itself never changes. One need not be a relativist to understand that circumstances evolve and principles need to change and adapt. Groucho Marx, a distant cousin, once quipped in a film in which he was confronted by a grande dame questioning his virtue. “Have you no principles?” she demanded. “*Yes, I have principles, and if you don’t like them, I have others.*” Worth remembering that this is not merely a tribute to comic cynicism but a reminder that firmness of principle can also reflect dogmatism and orthodoxy. We must beware orthodoxy in civic education.

The reality is that as citizenship evolves and democracy changes, civic education must also change. Its principles—thank you Groucho Marx—need to be adapted again and again to changing circumstances. There are at least three fundamental changes that have taken place in the last half century that we have not yet adequately addressed in our sometimes rather haughtily virtuous field. The changes may be on our minds, but we have not really taken their measure with respect to the civic education programs trust in and teach, making those programs ever less relevant to teaching democracy today. Whether you look left or right, look at Occupy Wall Street or the *Indignados* in Madrid, or to protests in South America; or look to the Tea Party and some of the revanchist nationalist parties in Europe, they are united by two critical positions: rage at elites coupled with a deep distrust in democracy; and the conviction that traditional civic education is at best irrelevant to their concerns, and at worst an attempt by rationalizers of power to obscure illegitimacy – in Rousseau’s phrase, to ‘throw garlands of flowers over our chains.’ If you say to the angry and the outraged on either side of the political divide: *let us help you become educated and*





empowered as citizens, and we will soothe your anger and restore your faith in democracy, they will, if they are polite, merely laugh. If they are not polite, they may do something much less civil, like occupying your favourite park or challenging capitalism itself.

We need then to begin to think about the real world in which young people live—not just those who are disempowered, not just the disadvantaged, though certainly those, but also the so-called advantaged who feel disadvantaged, deem themselves disempowered in the political world in which they live. The very term “closing the citizenship gap” we civic educators use suggests that there is something called citizenship that works, that is good, but – the problem is -- some people just don’t understand it or know how it works. Our job we imagine is to show them, bring those on the outside not yet fully empowered as citizens into the civic realm, into the realm of citizenship. Mainstream those on the outside yearning to be citizens.

Yet this is no longer the realm of suffragism or the civil rights movement, where those on the outside wanted in and fought courageously to secure a place in the civic sun where other already basked in civic plenitude. Today’s angry outsiders don’t want in because to them there is no “in,” because the realm of citizenship itself appears to be meaningless, or worse fraudulent – a device to distract them from where the real power resides in money, media, wealth and multinational corporations. We seduce them into citizenship to blind them to whom the true governors of the world are. The citizenship we proffer they don’t believe in. The crisis we face is not a crisis of the absence of citizens from democratic politics but a crisis of political democracy itself. It is a crisis not of citizen education but a systemic crisis in the infrastructure citizens are supposed to be part of. Unless we find ways to deal with that deeper level of illegitimacy, promoting citizenship will have little effect other than to throw garlands of flowers over *our* chains.

Let me then raise three fundamental questions, three challenges that respond to fundamental changes in our culture and society over the last 50 years; and then suggest, if not answers, dilemmas raised by these challenges for civic education. For our core challenge is not that young people don’t believe in citizenship in theory, but that they don’t believe in civic education or in the democracy to which it strives in practice -- and if we are honest, we must acknowledge, their doubts are well grounded. Our political elites continue to rail against “socialism” and associate democracy with market capitalism, but in the United States more young people under thirty believe in socialism (whatever they mean by it) than in capitalism – 49% to 46% in a recent poll. Far too many of the young fail even to vote, though voting is only the first and in some ways least important obligation of citizenship. But that is no longer because they are ill-educated and disadvantaged, but because their so-called advantages allow them to see how powerless and voiceless they really are in a ‘democratic’ politics dominated by money and special interests, and by the politicians these forces have bought. Young cynics may vote once or twice and conclude it doesn’t matter. They may work for a “new” politician like Barack Obama or Ron Paul and decide no one leader can make a difference in a system so corrupt. They live not in ignorance but in disappointment: disappointment that the ideal of a new civic Europe is nothing more than another manifestation of the all-mighty Euro and its subordination of the social state to the banks; disappointment that the audacity of hope appears as an opaque screen behind which the rich rule as usual. How can they maintain a faith in their citizenship when the capital of Europe seems to have moved from Brussels to Frankfurt (the home of the European bank)? and when America has seen Supreme Court decisions like Citizens United that allow the country to be ruled not from the White House but from the Stock Market and those who profit from it.



The protesters were knowing enough to occupy not Washington but Wall Street. Understanding democracy better than us, they followed to its source the money that has occupied our politics.

With these reflections as prelude, then, here are the three things that we need to address. First, the democratic deficit-- the crisis in democracy itself, reflected in the fact that for so many young people citizenship no longer feels like an option; this is true on the Left and the Right, true for the Tea Party in the United States, true for nationalists and right wing populist parties in Europe who believe the constitution of Europe and the constitutions of their countries, along with the Declaration of Human Rights, have precipitated the collapse of civility and democracy, if not civilization itself. Multiculturalism may seem a virtue of our new interdependent world, and I believe it is, but to those anxious about the future, it inspires only fear and loathing. "Give us back our country" they plead, refusing to accept the new global demographics and the fluidity of an interdependent world. The left is little less accommodating of change, if for different reasons. For them it is not the power of the "other", but the power of money that undermines their belief in democracy. How can voting be relevant in a world of super-pacs and private money as primary movers of the public weal?

The second key issue focuses on technological change: we live in a new age of digital media and electronic information and communication. As civic educators and (small-d) democrats, we have not yet begun to take the full measure of these new technologies and what they mean for our world or for democracy. I want to suggest that the challenge in an information age, where not manufacturing, not the production of commodities, but the production and distribution of information and the development of new electronic and digital media dominate both politics and commerce, have had profound effects on the very nature of democracy and the nature of education, and hence on civic education as well. The Chinese dissenter Liew Xiaobo, deprived of normal means of expression, said recently "The Internet is God's gift to China." Yet it also has been God's curse on as well as God's gift to America in ironic ways I will explore here.

The third challenge, related to the rapid changes implicit in the first two, in the growing importance of interdependence. It is evident in the Arab Spring, where a viral and contagious movement that started in Tunisia and then went to Egypt and from there to Yemen and Bahrain and then to Libya and Syria, spreading almost instantaneously throughout the region. Little happens today in one country at a time. We live in a world of interdependence; and yet we still talk about citizenship and civic education one nation at a time, as if we lived in the cosy, insular world of 18th century "inter-national" relations.

Three daunting challenges then: the deep democratic deficit in our politics in the West; the coming of digital media with new virtue and vices; and the brute realities of global interdependence. A few words about each of them, and then I will try to suggest -- if not answers -- an approach that might allow us to begin to address the challenges. If we fail to do this, civic education as we have known and practiced it is likely to become ever more irrelevant to those who most need it.

The democratic deficit is the most obvious of the new challenges. It confronts us in the reality of the Greek deficit and Greek indebtedness and the spread of financial insecurity to Italy, Spain and even France – generally, the southern tier of European nations. We know that even America approached the precipice of default and saw its credit rating imperilled as

never before. This is the country whose dollars stood for stability and predictability for a half century or more after World War II. If America defaults on its debt, who then is safe? The intersection of the financial crisis and democracy has precipitated a continuing crisis in democratic legitimacy.

The linkage between the economic and political aspects of the crisis have not always been fully acknowledged. The context for the evolving crisis has been the growing inequality within and among nations – even in prosperous Europe and the United States. The gap between rich and poor in the United States was much less pronounced forty years ago. Since 1970 it has been increasing. Today, the gap between those who live under the poverty level, and those who are very wealthy—what the Wall Street protesters call the “1 and the 99” has never been larger. In the long history of America there has never been more inequality than today between the very rich and the very poor. Nearly one in four American children live under the poverty line. One in three young men of colour, African American men and Latinos between 18 and 25, are in prison, under indictment, or on parole—part of the criminal justice system.

The housing crisis that marked the great economic debacle of 2008 has affected people of colour in the United States more than any other group. For most lower middle class or working class poor people ownership of a home or apartment comprised the great preponderance of their wealth. The housing collapse and mortgage defaults, injurious to many, were catastrophic for people of color. Since 2007, black Americans have lost 57% of their total wealth, and Latinos 66%, almost all of it in the value of homes lost. Variable rate mortgages pinned to rates that rose even as home value declined – an attractive investment option for secondary and tertiary investors – were untenable for mortgagees; their houses quite suddenly lost enough value to make them less than the face value of the mortgages on them. Moreover, in the wake of the crisis, government funds that might have gone to offset homeowner losses or rewrite and refinance their loans instead went to bail-out the banks, which were expected, without penalties or enforcement, to do that job themselves. They didn't and instead used the bailouts to restructure their own debt and pay executive bonuses; and stash the cash and wait to see what was coming next. The banking crisis was solved, the home ownership crisis was ignored, and the financial collapse became a collapse in trust, a democratic crisis. Inequality grew, legitimacy declined.

The gap in wealth and income within developed nations was accompanied by a growing gap between the West (and the other G-20 states) and the rest. Latin America regressed, despite the strong economic growth in nations like Mexico and Brazil. Increases in productivity notwithstanding, that gap continues to grow in many different domains. Mr Krüger referred to the gap in digital technology users. We see digital innovation as a great leap forward but digital inequality tracks its progress.

Inequality has of course been a direct product of the market mythology of the last forty years since Reagan and Thatcher persuaded us that government is the problem and markets the solution for all our difficulties. Privatization of so many previously public functions, and the preference for private goods over the public good, has left those with needs without an ally or equalizer. The myth of perfect markets that eliminates the need for government and for democratic public institutions removes the argument for democracy and nullifies the claims of the needy for succor. Market ideology strikes at the use of legitimate public coercion deployed on behalf of justice in the name of a putative private freedom that does not exist. Neither John Locke nor Adam Smith, the idols of modern market mythology,

believed markets had the potential, by themselves, to nurture and sustain competition and freedom in the absence of sovereign government and its regulatory oversight. Under conditions of natural anarchy, free markets become more and more monopolistic, more and more hierarchical, more and more oligarchic.

At that moment after the Civil War when there was no regulation of the economy in the United States, the absence of state intervention yielded a gilded age of robber barons whose great trusts and cartels made a mockery of such capitalist virtues as competition and pluralism. The Standard Oil Company came to dominate not only petroleum production, but a host of allied businesses such as railroads and the barrel making. Markets free of the state became notably illiberal and monopolistic. Only when a Republican President Teddy Roosevelt recognized in unfettered capitalism the spectre of monopoly trusts controlled by "malefactors of great wealth" who were even more dangerous to real capitalism than to democracy, was democratic governance (in the form of "trust-busting" regulation) recognized as the condition for the survival of capitalism and genuine market competition. In persuading his fellow citizens that the job of coercive and monopolistic government is to guarantee the freedom of markets, Roosevelt demonstrated the ironic and dialectical truth that public monopoly could alone guarantee private competition, whereas "free" markets left to their own devices produced only monopoly.

The country apparently has to relearn the lesson every generation or two—in the 1930's then again in the 1960's and then during the tech bubble of the 1990's, when new pioneers of a new digital technology tried to argue that they required no government oversight. Yet from AT&T to Microsoft, Apple, Google and today to Facebook, successor 'leading edge' companies have pushed against regulation even as they swallowed up their competitors. The information economy is supposed to be the freest segment of the market. Yet in the very era when big tech companies and big banks were threatening pluralism and edging towards monopoly, a Democratic Administration in Washington was pushing for deregulation, extending President Reagan's market ideology into Democratic turf. On the wings of the Democratic Leadership Council, an outfit wedded to making peace between the Democratic Party and big business, President Clinton (the DLC's President in the 1980s) became an avatar of deregulation. He deregulated the new digital media by declaring in the new Federal Communications Act of 1996 that spectrum abundance made the oversight of the federal government over media enshrined in the Federal Communications Act of 1934 obsolete; and he then repealed Glass-Steagall – the law that had put up a wall between commercial banks and market speculation and prevented what subsequently became that reckless and profiteering approach to investment in housing that led to the 2008 crisis. American commercial banks were suddenly able to take the mortgages that were their proper business and package, bundle and sell them on secondary and tertiary markets. Rather than making a fair business out of loaning money to homeowners and businesses, banks became speculators leveraging other people's money at ever more risky rates. The collapse of 2008 seemed to become nearly inevitable, and with it the collapse of public trust, first in financial institutions, then in government itself when government failed to intervene on behalf of the victims of bank speculation but instead bailed out the banks.

This is not then just a story about Tories, Republicans and Conservatives protecting monopoly interests. It is about Democrats and Social Democrats pulling down the public barriers that regulate monopoly interests – apparently infected with the same market mythology. This consensus among the political classes insistent on letting the market do what it pleases went unchallenged until voices were finally raised at OCCUPY WALL

STREET. The politicians who once saw themselves as stewards of a public trust now imagined their duty was to private profit and “free” markets. These politicians are not bought, but do the work of big business, big oil, big banks, willingly. Nobody paid populists like Bill Clinton and audacious liberals like President Obama to champion the market. Wall Street apostles such as Robert Rubin, Larry Summers and Tim Geithner were chosen by the politicians as their economic wizards. Those responsible for the economic disaster were invited to fix it – not exactly foxes guarding the henhouse, but guardians of red meat with a taste for flesh. Under the watch of Wall Street on Capitol Hill, four million Americans lost their homes since 2008. Yet other than a few symbolic losers like Lehman Brothers, most of the great big banks and financial houses have survived very nicely on tax dollars.

The European story is much the same. Those exacting from Greece and other struggling EU members the penalty for daring to spend on their welfare states are not just Christian Democrats and fiscal conservatives but parties of every stripe who have put bank interests before public goods. With a single seemingly rational term “conditionality” the wealthiest European nations have opted to privilege the banks and pummel the people, Conditionality demands that nations in need of loans moderate or reverse their national policies on spending and welfare – however democratically those policies have been made – to bank priorities about how a “fiscally responsible” (read: good for outside investors) country should be run: austerely, with minimal spending and with full attention of the profitability of those investing from abroad. In effect the condition for investment from abroad becomes the yielding of sovereignty to the investors. We will decide how you spend your revenues, whether you offer pensions, how much goes to education or welfare – if any at all. For the most part, conditionality has meant the dismantling of the welfare state and the disempowerment of labor unions – whether in Latin America or the Southern tier of Europe.

One might say banks have the duty to impose as many conditions as they can to minimize risk and maximize profits. That is their “job.” But sovereign governments are obliged to push back, put priorities and values on the table next to profits; but instead they have become the forced allies of the banks. While the banks can discount democracy, democratic government presumably should not. Think of what this loss of democratic sovereignty means to a young woman considering civic participation in, say, Athens: get involved in a system where your vote is irrelevant, and the popular will is going to be subordinated to the will of the banks? Vote for welfare measures foreign investors can veto? A good way to breed cynicism, but hardly citizenship. In a system where the votes of all Greece can be defeated by the single ballot of the European Central Bank, you are asking me to take politics seriously!?

The crisis in democracy is then a crisis in trust, a crisis in the beliefs on which democracy rests: that votes count one by one, and the majority rules. It is the social contract itself that is at risk. Citizens contract with fellow citizens and empower a government to rule in their name, transparent and accountable to the people, all in the expectation that the *vox populi*, the voice of the people, will prevail. For 350 years, this implicit social contract has rooted the faith in democracy and allowed civic educators to call out those who won’t participate as “free riders” exploiting a system in which their rights are benefited and their interests protected while they withhold participation and deny obligation. But now? The argument for citizen engagement is...exactly what?

Without trust, the contract fails. And trust depends on reciprocal action, the people exercising responsibility, their government representing their best interests. Trust – call it

Vertrauen or Confidence -- has gone missing. Scarcely a single public institution can claim it is trusted by those it “serves.” Civilisation itself is rooted in trust, and democratic civilisation needs a double portion. If you lived here in Poland in 1960, you didn’t need trust; you only needed a prudent caution and capacity to remain silent. Tyranny can ride on fear and force and intimidation. Despots are feared not trusted. But democracy, runs on trust, trust of one another and trust of government -- both trust in the government, and trust by government in those it serves. Trust arises out of experience and reciprocal action: it will never be produced by imperatives like ‘trust me!’ Earn it or lose it. When the young people at Wall Street ask reasonable observers whether they are right in mistrusting banks and worrying that their own politicians may be in the embrace of big money, is there any other answer than “yes, you are right”? The loss of trust has been precipitated by government rather than by cynical citizens. The people are not the problem, the people’s wholly bought-and-paid-for deputies are. (Brecht wrote ironically about the people speaking against the state, and the state responding that it “was time to elect a new people”!) How then does all this fit into the civic education curriculum? It is very hard to ask people to participate in a system that is broken; hard to educate them civically when civics is bankrupt; or to educate people into participation in a system that they think is fraudulent, and where their own participation feels like hypocrisy and pretence -- the pretence that they somehow matter and make a difference. Such nonsense is a recipe either for withdrawal and complacency, narcissistic self-obsession in career and family; or worse, for a revolution not in the name of democracy but in the name of exposing its fraudulence.

It would be a sad day indeed, as the Arab Nations are struggling to find their way into a new world of democracy through revolution, if in the old democracies citizens were compelled to seek revolutionary means to save themselves *from* democracy! For as we have learned, and the brave rebels of the Arab spring are discovering, democracy may sometimes be preceded by revolution, but revolutions by no means assure democracy. In 1789 in Paris and 1917 in St. Petersburg and 1979 in Teheran, deep and violent revolutions succeeded without producing anything resembling democracy. Bringing down tyrants and raising up a civil society and democratic civic culture are not the same thing. The Arabs are going to have to figure out how to do the hard work of making a democracy, which takes more than decapitating a tyrant to accomplish. But, we are now in a position where the only choices that young people think they have—I don’t think they are right, but that is what they believe— is withdraw into a private world and become exploiters themselves, work the system; or overthrow more or less everything and take your chances with anarchy.

The second challenge we face lies in the many dilemmas of new digital technology. We usually spend most of our time talking (and rightly so) about the promise and possibilities of the digital age. In my *Strong Democracy*, as early as 1984, I suggested that the new interactive technologies would overcome scale through communication in a way that would allow participation to function over great distances; that new technology might give a new license to participatory democracy, which disappeared on the threshold of the modern age of the nation-state when the scale of new “national” societies outgrew polis institutions. 100 people, 1000 or perhaps even 20,000 Athenian men could govern themselves through popular assemblies, but 500,000 become pretty difficult, and five million is unthinkable. Today we are looking at mega-cities with mega-millions of people, with China a nation of 1.4 billion. And we are supposed to consider direct democracy? Yet the reality is digital technology alters the democratic landscape and permits at least the possibility of a more extensive participation. For if scale limits the size of a democratic community in physical space, virtual space is expandable and allows virtual communities to extend across the world. The power of media, old and new, is the power of pixels, the power of what we see on

screens large and small to change our perceptions and how we understand our social interactions. Our cell phones and the web, and our access to the web, present us with new forms of communication, new forms of interactivity; but they also become willy-nilly—without our choosing -- the real educators of the modern world, the hidden tutors of the young.

When we talk about civic education, we talk about programs in schools, perhaps also after school programs that engage young people for three, perhaps six hours a week. Which adds up to perhaps 180 hours a year. But young people who spend these several hours each week with you, with their teachers, are spending 60-70 hours every week 52 weeks a year with the media: films, web, videogames, television, smart phones, and all the things that go with them. They are being taught lessons there which, good or bad, have nothing to do with citizenship, fairness, equality, or democracy. Take a tour of the video games, particularly the multiplayer games, young people play. There are a few like SIM CITY or PEACE, planning a UN aimed at civic growth. But the great majority feature menace and mayhem, killing and crippling for sport, the ripping and raping of women. Boys aged 8 to 18 (or 28 or 88) are their target audience. Such games do teach. But what they teach is not civics or deliberation or community service – or any other public good or public competence. They teach private skills averse to political, speech and deliberation – skills facilitating narcissism, violence and violation. The films young people watch, made for 14-year-old boys and 15-year-old girls, dumb down rather than smarten up kids, helping them grow up. No reason why Hollywood and video game programmers should be responsible for educating the young, but that is in effect what it is doing, if only by default. The impact crosses national borders and speaks to people around the world. Like social media and the internet in general, movies and television are part of an environment that cannot but help be influential, and thus "educational." But education here means commerce. The reality is that much of what happens on the web is commercial not educational, often pornographic not just commercial. Which is to say, commerce has become the face of education, just as porn has become the face of commerce.

Even on Facebook, which many see as the most innovative and socially useful side of new media, there are problems. With users now numbering between a half billion and a billion people, the program is ubiquitous. It certainly mobilizes friendship and facilitates social relations. But what does it do for citizenship or democracy? Think for minute about how Facebook works. If you were to invent a social technology on the web that encouraged citizenship, that encouraged meeting strangers, that encouraged you to talk to people different than yourself, that encouraged you to cross the many different walls and frontiers that separate us from one another in an interdependent world, Facebook would be the last platform you would come up with. It segments audiences and divides people into the like-minded who like one another. It is about friends (however superficial) not encounters with the "other," or those with whom you may disagree – the sorts of folks we have to live with in a democracy. Democracy is the art of surviving in one community with people different than ourselves: different values, different objectives, different interests, perhaps different ethnic backgrounds, different religions, different races. That is in the very nature of the democratic encounter. It is almost impossible to have a democratic encounter on Facebook, because as Mark Zuckerberg has designed his program, he wants you to talk about who and what you LIKE, not what you dislike or disapprove or what makes you uncomfortable. We want accommodation and comfort, not conflict and discomfort. You don't attract users by forcing them to confront those with whom they are uncomfortable, the sort of people we need to deal with in the political environment.

Same is true for the feedback loops built into web shopping on, say, Amazon: here smart algorithms will feed you new stuff based on the old stuff you already bought. It won't expose you to the unfamiliar or press upon you a point of view other than the one already embedded in what you already have been buying. Great for shopping, lousy for politics and civic life; or for an education about encounters with the new and different in whose presence you might actually learn something and grow (if painfully).

Many years ago, when I first went to college, it was common to view the experience as an exercise in novelty, strangeness, learning new worlds, encountering people different than those you grew up with in your home town. It was the first time you might meet people of a different race or religion, maybe from a different country. That happens less today, thanks to social media, which permit young people to pre-test their new environments, locate people just like themselves on Facebook, create a familiar circle before ever arriving on campus. Universities are to be sure more diverse and multicultural than ever before, but no need for the young to have that experience since they now can limit their encounters to "friends." On Facebook, there is already a ready made new-town, just like the old-town from which you come. Local merchants in college towns complain that bars, cafés, and restaurants are less frequented because young people are doing their socialising on the web. Even roommates may find themselves sitting side by side, but in touch, if at all, only if both are logged in on a texting or Facebook or Skype site.

Call the social media the anti-social media then, anything but the "civic" media. We can't blame Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg. The fact that 800 million people are looking at the world through the eyes of an aging 18-year-old Harvard sophomore, wary of women and averse to conflict, is too bad—but he doesn't pretend to be anything else and his ubiquitous website prospers because there is a global appetite for familiarity and comfort and commerce. But to imagine Facebook incarnates the soul of the web or is the best a "social medium" can do to foster democratic communication in diverse and conflicted societies is absurd. Surely we can construct a civic web capable of more. A medium in which encounters with strangers and dialogue with adversaries is enabled – even encouraged.

Similarly, Amazon is uncanny in its capacity to show us books we want before we know we want them. Surely, then it might offer its customers books they may not "want," but should want if they desire education and cultural interface – titles that, once offered, they would even agree they want and need. Books distinguished by difference and novelty. How about this for a pitch? "You just bought a book you really like: now how about trying something else! If you liked Hunger Games, maybe you need to read William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. You have bought a great many Creationist titles, here's a Darwin primer. You seem to be an atheist, have you looked at Alvin Plantinga's *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, a book exploring the relationship of science and religion? Some will bridle at such ideas as the NannyStore and the Hectoring Professors Network, and in a way that's true, but at the same time maybe that is what an anarchic, commercialized, meretricious society needs to rescue civility, broad-mindedness and civilization. Hectoring educators along with hectoring pornographers! Media DO matter, but we have to make them matter beyond what yields profits and fun. Facebook needs an "OtherFacesBook."

What is ironic is that a medium whose architecture is so democratic – point-to-point interaction horizontally, rather than top-down broadcasting with only passive reaction as an option. Like the telephone, the web acts laterally to put you in touch with anyone and everyone with a web address: no mediation, no editors, no authoritative voices, just you and

your neighbors, world-wide. The hierarchy typical of broadcast media, newspapers and magazines, with their verticality and “We talk, you all listen and watch” mentality is replaced by a truly democratic interactivity. Yet talking to one another right across the spectrum of difference, is the last thing we do with those new media. We construct little silos of friends, oases of purchasing, concentrations of segmented interests that divide rather than bring us together. We need to be pushed out of the comfort zones we fall into.

If I am right we will WANT to be pushed out, and will welcome, in addition to the friendly, knowing sites that reinforce who we are, sites that challenge who we are, that beckon change and exploration and imagination. Democracy, civility, education and growth ask no less of us. We have every right to ask the same of the new media. It will not, however, be the desire for profit that will impel us to new platforms and programs – though they may in time become profitable as well as useful. But they require entrepreneurial civic capital, a willingness to take risks. Which is true of almost everything we do that is hard but rewarding from art and culture to invention and knowledge. How civic education and democracy could benefit if the new media became their tools!

This brings me to the third and last of my concerns, the one we talk about the least. Let me put it very simply to you: we live in a world today of interdependence, a world in which every challenge we face as citizens crosses borders and impacts us globally. Call them the brute realities of interdependence: climate change, terrorism, markets in labor and finance, pandemics, crime, drugs, war itself – all transnational in origin and impact. Think about warming. In my home town, there is no problem of “New York warming,” and I know here in Poland yours is not a “Warsaw warming” problem. It’s *global* warming. No New York flu today in my hometown, but Hong Kong flu, Mexican swine flu, West Nile virus – our health plagues travel around the planet in a few days, and no single national health system, however efficient, can begin to respond effectively. Businesses understand it, there is no such thing as a purely French or Japanese car company today, no such thing as a purely American or Chinese bank. Jobs are global too, migrant laborers crossing borders “illegally” to go to where the jobs are.

Terrorism is also a cross border interdependent phenomenon that does not hinge on the relations or reactions of sovereign states. If we did not know this before 9/11, we should have learned it since then. Before that fateful day in 2001, there had been no foreign invaders on American soil since 1812, when the British burned Washington. But on that bright September morning ten years ago, it was not a foreign force that attacked the United States. Had we built the Star Wars shield favoured by Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, that virtual dome over the United States the President imagined would prevent rockets, planes, and missiles raining down on the United States, it would have made no difference. Because on that morning the attack came not from outside the United States, but from inside. The hijacked American planes were seized from the inside by a malevolent non-governmental organisation called Al Qaeda using sleeper cells inside the country and the nation's own commercial airliners as weapons. It was America's first war experience in a world without borders in which nation states were no longer the enemy. Afterward, President Bush tried to pin down and destroy Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, but Afghanistan was not the enemy. The global terrorists moved on to Pakistan and Indonesia and Somalia and Yemen. They went over into Somalia, down into Sudan, down into Yemen. The malicious bandits had a better grasp of interdependence than did the United States and its allies. They had made their homes before 9/11 in New Jersey and Florida!

Here then is the dilemma: while every challenge we face today is interdependent, every political response we counter with, every democratic solution we tender, arise from independent and sovereign nation-states that barely recognize the world without borders. To 21st century problems we get 18th century answers. Moreover, democracy itself, long sustained by sovereign states and the social contract, is locked inside the nation-state box leaving the planet without ways in which to react to cross-border threats democratically. Walled in by their sovereignty, democratic nation-states find it hard to cooperate.

In this radical asymmetry between the interdependence of the challenges and the independence and solitariness of the political entities offering solutions lies the principal problem of our times. With the politics of interdependence so badly understood and democratic citizenship locked behind borders, how should civic educators respond? How do we begin to think about global governance, global citizenship, global civil society, global political movements in a curriculum focused everywhere, country by country, on sovereignty, statehood and independence? Even when democratic states succeed internally in addressing those diminishing numbers of internal or “domestic” problems still left to them, they cannot begin to come to terms with the far larger number of problems beyond their solitary reach. Nearly 200 sovereign nations gathered at Copenhagen and then Mexico City and Durban in hopes of making a dent in climate change only to discover that their precious sovereignty incapacitated them from taking decisions. The right to national self-determination of which they are rightly proud paralyzed common action. After all, that is how the world of nation states works. It is not, however, how the world of climate change works, and how the world of disease works, and how the world of crime works; or how al Qaeda operates.

How then do we create citizens who are not merely good citizens of Poland or Nepal or Japan, but who are good citizens of the world? “Citizens of the world” was for a long time a pleasant and idealistic abstraction, but today it is a necessity, but no closer to realization for all that. Understandably, we still imagine ourselves citizens first of all in the towns, cities, and neighborhoods in which we live. It took generations for patriotic allegiance to attach to the new larger nation states of the early modern era. Now we ask for a global patriotism, a citizenship not resting on the solidarity of communities of the like-minded. We must demand nothing less than a cosmopolitan patriotism – yet that very phrase seems oxymoronic. There has to be something like a global patria, but what can that mean and how do we get there? Yet while we live in a world that we accept as a world *sans frontieres* which is a world of *maladies sans frontieres* and *guerres sans frontieres* and *marches sans frontieres* and *terrorisme sans frontieres*, we still have not discovered how to forge a democracy *sans frontieres*, *citoyens sans frontieres*. We worry, and rightly so, about the democratic deficit inside the nation, wondering how we can make our young people effective citizens of England or France or India, but forget that even if we succeed, we face the greater task of making them citizens of an interdependent world. Civic patriots of one country may be averse to cooperation with other countries. Democratic nation states, because they are democratic, even at their best may sustain a popular parochialism more damaging to cross border cooperation than the approach of tyrannical states that can modify course at the whim of a dictator. It is easier for China to address global warming forcefully, and with the needed urgency, than for the U.S. to do so. The Chinese leadership can do what it wants, while the American government, ever susceptible to the people’s will and the media that manipulate it, is reluctant to impose costs on or demand sacrifice from its ‘spoiled’ voters. Just ask President Obama if he can let oil prices float upwards to spur greater attention to alternative energy! Tell the voters on whom your re-election depends to give up their gas-guzzling cars? turn down the thermostats in winter and turn off the A/C in the summer? Try to sell that

politically to people who see their country as number one and their comfort as a right attached to their citizenship.

It is not enough then for civics to teach that democracy within the nation is enough, that popular government freed from money will make citizens safe, secure and free. Unless citizenship is global, with a cosmopolitan and cross-border character, its practices will be increasingly unable to respond to the global challenges of our time. The foundations on which national democracy rest – solidarity, social capital, strong community, a sense of commonality, a civil religion – which are at the core of what as civic educators we try to instill in people in urging them to become responsible national citizens, can be inimical to global citizenship and the community of “others” with whom we must make our global accommodation.

In the United States, as Jurgen Habermas has argued, we have a strong civil religion version of *Verfassungspatriotismus* or constitutional patriotism that comes with a set of constitutional beliefs – a civic liturgy focused on the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, Martin Luther King’s speech “I Have a Dream” and Roosevelt’s on the “Four Freedoms.” But a strong and exceptionally *American* civil religion that leads us to boast about our *exceptionalism* can come to breed arrogance and impede cooperation.

We face then these daunting challenges as civic educators, and are duty bound to take them up. We need to choose between a version of civic education rooted in what sociologists call “bonding capital” that strengthens the internal glue holding a people together, often at the expense of distancing “others”; and a version that nurtures “bridging capital” that thins our internal ties enough to permit us to imagine empathetic relations with others across border and barriers. The old civics is rooted in the need for participation and popular sovereignty within borders. The new civics must extend sympathies across borders and encompass differences -- not just with tolerance but with imagination and relationships. We can “friend” the folks like us inside our sovereign territories or we can try to embrace others with whom we share little other than the need to survive together all the global challenges we face. To do this in a realistic way we must come to terms not only with liberty, equality and community, but with power.

In her introduction this evening, Alicja spoke eloquently about the need to ask the right questions before expecting the right answers. But for civics teachers, the questions we ask that are the most important are the questions we ask of power. Civic education is not just about questioning, but about questioning power. This is why at its best civic education is always “subversive”. If citizens are unwillingly to subvert power, their own “popular power” included, they will fail themselves. Talk to Occupy Wall Street about civic education and the responsibilities of citizens in this corrupt and twisted system, and they will laugh at your naiveté or wince at your hypocrisy. But say to them ‘our job is to train in the subverting of power’ and they may listen. It is when power is corrupted that liberty is undermined, and the confrontation with power is how liberty and equality are won.

At its best, not just civic education but all education is subversive -- which is why it entails posing questions, putting questions to an old order, yesterday’s arrangements. But that means civic education cannot just be about reinforcing who we are and what we believe, iconic and impressive as these may be. Certainly we can cherish what the West, what America and old Europe have accomplished in 300 years. Our friends in Poland cherish it too

or they wouldn't be where they are today. But some of Europe's newest members have joined Europe at the very moment its older members have stopped asking hard questions about power. In Cairo and Tripoli and Homs people have asked hard questions about power at the risk of their lives, and that is why they are on a road now to something other than the autocracy under which they have lived for generations. Here in the West, however, I am not sure we are asking the same hard questions of our old and tired institutions -- institutions that while not autocratic are tainted by money, infected with arrogance, and in many ways no longer very democratic. Yes, the Internet is an extraordinary innovation, but is it teaching us lessons that undermine what young people need to learn? Yes, *Verfassungspatriotismus* or civil religion, is a good thing for social capital, but it may be undermining the necessary message of cosmopolitanism in a modern world in need of bridging capital. Education in interdependence calls today for subverting interdependence. Cooperation demands the interrogation of sovereignty. Ultimately, democracy is how we subvert the natural hierarchy and dominion of power by arranging for it to be shared. Not eliminated, but shared. We cannot live in a world without power, but we can only live in power's presence freely if power is shared. That is democracy's true meaning, and its challenges today is to figure out how to share power across borders. In my forthcoming book, *IF MAYORS RULED THE WORLD*, I will suggest that changing our focus from nation-states to cities may foster cross-border cooperation and informal global governance. Whether or not that is a satisfactory answer, we will require new approaches.

The young people at Occupy Wall Street have stumbled on no sudden solutions, though they see clearly that the present arrangements masquerading as democracy are failing us. The protesters may exhibit a certain innocence, but they ask the right questions and in their suggestion that their participatory practices look more like democracy than the current Super-pac dominated electoral politics, they are quite convincing. The way to honor them is not necessarily to join their protest against the "one percent," and against the banks who have been largely rewarded for their irresponsibility (although I could think of worse ways to engage politically!). But it is to start asking the hard questions and to insist that the curriculum of freedom entails a practice of questioning power.