VISIONS OF DEMOCRACY IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY: THE THEORIES OF DANIEL BELL, MANUEL CASTELLS, AND YOCHAI BENKLER

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I unearth the common threads and subtle evolution of democratic ideals in mainstream theories of the information society that span over thirty years. I apply the lens of democratic theory, with a primary focus on liberal and republican traditions, to perform a close reading of seminal works such as Daniel Bell's (1973) *Post-Industrial Society*, Manuel Castells' (1996; 1997; 1998) *Information Age* trilogy, and Yochai Benkler's (2006) *Wealth of Networks*. Through a comparative analysis, I expose the democratic canvas upon which these scholars paint their images of a rising social organization that is structured around flows of information and knowledge.

Two democratic axioms stand at the center of an emergent model of information democracy. The first axiom prescribes the ideal democratic subject with the affective trait of social awareness; this model of democracy, I argue, presumes that its citizens are always ready and willing to understand, to share, and to empathize with others in their community. The second axiom refers to the idea that technologically facilitated communication can help deliver, grow, and sustain the individual citizens' capacity for social awareness. Flows of information operate as the democratic citizens' eyes and ears into the lives of others, facilitating mutual understanding.

Thus, democracy in the information society realizes the common good through the affective orientation of each and every individual towards the social other, and through flows of information and knowledge that support such an orientation. The presence of these two axioms allows these scholars, in turn, to weld two ideals usually considered antithetical to each other – the liberal ideal of individual freedom and the republican ideal of the common good.

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Preface

Debates about the information society rarely exclude the work of Daniel Bell, Manuel Castells, and Yochai Benkler. Critics may disagree with them, but they cannot escape their centrality – especially the agenda-setting quality of each author's magnum opus. For example, Daniel Bell's (1973) *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* is considered to have "exerted a profound influence on the discourse on the economy in the information age" (Stalder, 2006, p. 43). Written a quarter of a century later, Castells' (1996; 1997; 1998) *Information Age* trilogy has been hailed as "worthy of succeeding and superseding Bell," and deserving a place in the tradition of "Karl Marx and Max Weber" (Webster, 2006, p. 446). While it is the most recent of the three, Yochai Benkler's (2006) *Wealth of Networks* has also received praise beyond its years, prompting Lawrence Lessig to describe Benkler as the "leading intellectual of the information age" (Melber, 2010).

While these three works span a period of more than thirty years, they share a common vision about the increasing importance of information as the new foundational economic, cultural, and political infrastructure of society. None of them was the first to proclaim information as the new epicenter of social organization (eg.: Hayek, 1944; Machlup, 1962), yet, the vision that each one articulated captured the imagination of their peers, sparking a "legion of followers" (Webster, 2006, p. 7, on Bell), popularizers (e.g.: Kelly, 1994; Toffler, 1980), and inevitably critics as well (e.g.: Kumar, 1978; van Dijk, 1999).

Despite the vast literature on these three works, critics and followers alike have yet to systematically engage with the normative elements – especially the democratic ideals – that operate in the background of the information society theories that these authors so elegantly composed. This is the central aim of my dissertation: to trace the evolution of democratic ideals in mainstream theories of the information society and to understand how they shaped, in turn, the normative background of broader academic debates. Because of their centrality in such debates, my dissertation is also a contribution to scholars interested in excavating the intellectual origins of some of the most widely held beliefs about the role of the Internet in Western democracies.

In this dissertation I interrogate what we mean by the concept of *democracy* in relation to theories of the information society. I am not asking the question – quite popular these days – of what the Internet does to democracy, but rather I offer a detailed account of the democratic values that are weaved within mainstream theories of the information society.

On a first level, my research uncovers a link between these three information society scholars and a particular strand of democratic thought – the "deliberative" or "communicative" strand as it is usually called – which approaches democracy primarily as a form of communicative expression within a public sphere. What's more, my investigation shows how Bell, Castells, and Benkler share a fundamental attribute with their deliberative democratic counterparts: they all produce images of a democratic society that weld together political ideals that are usually associated with two competing democratic traditions – the ideal of individual freedom, usually associated with the liberal

tradition of democracy, and the ideal of the common good, usually associated with the republican tradition of democracy.

Furthermore, in this dissertation I argue that a particular theory of individual psychology is baked into the democratic visions of Bell, Castells, and Benkler. For these three scholars, I suggest, the archetypal democratic citizen is a person who is keenly empathetic to the needs of others and is willing and ready to volunteer affective labor for the promotion of the collective good. This affective orientation towards others, these scholars imply, is something that citizens give freely as the result of a natural response to internal desire; their social awareness is not an obligation of solidarity that contradicts self-interest, but rather emerges out of free will. This small detail makes, in turn, a world of conceptual difference since once we presume that citizens freely choose to turn their attention to the good of others, then the liberal ideals of individualism can become commensurate with republican approaches to the common good. Citizens of the information society freely become activists for the good of the community as a whole.

One last piece of this democratic puzzle remains, which I also address in this dissertation: What kind of social structures sustain individual social orientation? Especially in the work of Castells and Benkler, I argue, technologically facilitated communication helps deliver, grow and sustain, the individuals' capacity for social awareness. Flows of information inside and across the mass- and digital- public sphere operate as the citizen's eyes and ears – as the mediators of empathy – into the lives of others. At the background of the theories of the information society as these scholars auriculate them, I suggest, lies an image of communication as the central infrastructure of a democratic society.

As I discuss in the concluding chapter of this dissertation, such a prerogative of social awareness – of an affective orientation towards others – confines the range of legitimate emotional expression in the information society. It specifies too narrowly, that is, how citizens should feel and how they should interact with others; it presumes that the only choice they have is to connect and share in this new kind of communicative and expository democratic society. To assume that citizens should always be socially aware, or "other-oriented," to borrow a term from perhaps the earliest postindustrial scholar, David Riesman (1950), also suggests that the boundary between private and public life becomes conceptually meaningless. Some of the values long considered central to democracy – with the most prized of them being privacy – become contested under this approach, their meaning rendered unclear under the pressure of emotional transparency that democracies of the information age demand.

In this dissertation I offer a new reading of three landmark works of the information society – a reading that unearths the democratic ideals in each, traces the ways that those ideals influenced other scholars, and challenges established interpretations of those theories. Additionally, and more broadly, this dissertation offers a historically grounded explanation of the central intellectual threads that have informed some of our most cherished beliefs, hopes, and worries with regard to the role of the Internet in our increasingly complicated digital democracies. I turn now to a brief description of each chapter and its main findings.

Dissertation Structure

This dissertation consists of four main chapters. Chapter one provides an overview of the theories of democracy that are relevant to the analysis of the three scholars of the information society. This chapter is mostly descriptive, as my aim is to primarily distill for the reader the key democratic theories and competing ideals that illuminate the normative foundations of the work of Bell, Castells, and Benkler. Then, the following three chapters delve into the analysis of the theories of the information society: In each chapter I focus on one scholar and perform a close reading of their magnum opus – Bell's *Post-industrial Society*, Castells' *Information Age*, and Benkler's *Wealth of Networks*.

In all three chapters, I take into account the cultural and intellectual context, as well as situate my discussion within the theoretical divisions of liberalism and republicanism. Each of these three chapters could be read as a stand-alone analysis of the works of each author – works that are foundational to the field of information society studies. My overall aim, however, is to develop a narrative that brings these works together and provides an understanding of the democratic logic that constitutes the normative backbone of the intellectual history of key theories of the information society. Below, I briefly describe the key goals and arguments of each chapter.

Chapter One: Democratic Theory: Liberalism, Republicanism, and Communication

In chapter one, I discuss the key distinction between the liberal ideal of individual freedom and the republican ideal of the common good. I then delve into the theories of democracy as a form of communication (sometimes also described as theories of

deliberative democracy); mainly, I focus on the theories of Jürgen Habermas (1994; 1996) and Iris Marion Young (2000; 2011). I chose these two theorists because each one represents a different blend of liberalism and republicanism: Young's approach is closer to the republican tradition, while Habermas' is closer to the liberal tradition. Seen together, their theories offer a comprehensive normative language that captures the key values of liberalism and republicanism that are relevant to this dissertation.

In this chapter I suggest that both Habermas and Young consider democracy to be a process of universally inclusive communication in the public sphere. What chiefly separates them, however, is that Habermas conceptualizes speech as a form of rational argumentation while Young argues that politics in the public sphere exceeds mere rational speech. For Young, that is, speech also includes forms of affective expression such as art, street protest, and so on. A discussion of their democratic theories allows me to locate the different normative ideals that otherwise remain veiled underneath the empirical language that Bell, Castells, and Benkler employ.

Chapter Two: Welding Marxism and Liberalism in Bell's Model of Democracy

While mainstream scholarship (eg.: Hill, 1974; Ferkiss, 1979; Kumar 1978) has long argued that Bell's postindustrial political ideals espouse an elitist model of administrative democracy, in this chapter I show how Bell's theory draws from a plurality of political ideals that include, but also exceed, such elitist visions. To explain how that is the case, I focus on Bell's central sociopolitical concept of "theoretical knowledge" and show how his democratic approach is modelled upon the ideal academic

community of his time – a community that, as I suggest, welds the liberal ideal of individual freedom with the republican ideal of the common good.

I conclude this chapter by showing the ways in which Bell's democratic ideals resemble those of Jürgen Habermas'. Both scholars, I argue, espouse views that are situated between the liberal and republican traditions; both presume, I suggest, that a democratic society is bound by the trade-off between individual freedom of speech and the need for achieving a collective good that supersedes a mere aggregation of individually-held wills. This is a finding, I conclude, that runs counter to the established views of Habermas as a progressive theorist and of Bell as a conservative scholar.

Chapter Three: Freedom and The Common Good in Castells' Social Movement Democracy

In this chapter I excavate the submerged democratic ideals in Castells' (1996; 1997; 1998) theory through a close reading of his *Information Age* trilogy. I locate Castells' democratic ideals in what he describes extensively – in the rather less-popular second volume of his trilogy – as a "social movement." Contrary to established views of Castells as a neoliberal theorist (eg.: Ampuja & Koivisto, 2014; Garnham, 2004), I show how the political ideals encapsulated in the concept of the social movement are for Castells a blend between liberalism and republicanism. A key component of the information society, social movements, emerge from the activity of citizens who freely participate in political life and who aim to improve the greater common good.

I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the similarities between Iris Marion Young and Manuel Castells. I focus especially on the significance that both attribute to

issues of cultural identity, political struggle, and affective expression as structural components of a democratic society. Like Bell's relationship to Habermas, the connection between Castells and Young stands in stark contrast to established understandings of Young as a progressive leftist and of Castells as a regressive neoliberal. I do not argue that such readings are false, but rather aim to shed light into some underexplored similarities between their views that make visible, in turn, a broader undercurrent of common ideals between communicative theorists like Young and theorists of the information society like Castells.

Chapter Four: Active Citizenship for Social Equality in Benkler's Networked Democracy

In chapter four, I expose the problematic combination of republican and liberal ideals in Yochai Benkler's (2006) *Wealth of Networks*. While in both Castells and Bell we witness a conceptual struggle to weld the two traditions, for Benkler this process is almost effortless. His theory presumes that information technologies, mainly the Internet, makes possible a society in which republican societies that privilege the idea of the common good are the direct result of liberal expressions of individual freedom.

To show how that is the case for Benkler, I unearth the intellectual history of the concept of the "commons-based peer production," tracing it back to a particular strand of canonical theorists in New Institutional Economics such as Nobel laureates Ronald Coase and Elinor Ostrom, as well as legal theorist Robert Ellickson. Benkler borrows and modifies their theories in order to deliver a vision of a rising internet-based democracy in which key ideals of republicanism and liberalism coexist in near perfect harmony.

In the last part of this chapter, I expose the normative differences between Benkler's understanding of the networked public sphere and Habermas' theory of the public sphere. I compare the two, especially because Benkler claims to draw directly from Habermas' work. I show how Habermas' theory blends liberalism and republicanism but also presumes a certain trade-off between the two – something that Benkler's approach clearly misses. Individual freedom leads in Benkler's theory, as if by the presence of some invisible digital hand, to a society of relatively egalitarian, or to put it in his words, 'peer-to-peer' social relations.

I turn now to the first chapter of this dissertation, which describes the liberal and republican traditions, and then focuses on the work of Jürgen Habermas and Iris Marion Young.

CHAPTER 1

Democratic Theory: Liberalism, Republicanism, and Communication

While there are many different theories of democracy, only some incorporate communication as their structural component. And even within those that do, there are significant differences. Some models, for example, presume that communication operates more or less in a hierarchical fashion, as a process that connects the citizens below with the leaders above, and vice versa. Other models embrace a flatter understanding of communication as a form of cross citizen deliberation that synthesizes individual preferences into collectively-held opinions. Perhaps like every academic field worth its salt, even within the latter approach to democracy – usually described as the deliberative approach – there are fundamental disagreements between its theorists with regard to the extent, nature, and goals of such processes of democratic communication.

In the following pages, I briefly discuss the broader framework of political traditions in which theories of communication and democracy are enveloped – the liberal and republican traditions. Following Christians et al. (2009) and Held (2006), I draw four models of democracy in relation to liberalism and republicanism: the administrative and pluralist models on the liberal side, and the civic and direct models on the republican side. In the second part of this chapter, I sketch an approach to deliberative democracy that I draw primarily from the theories of Jürgen Habermas (1990; 1993; 1994; 1996) and Iris Marion Young (2000; 2011), showing how both their work is an idiosyncratic mixture that operates in between liberalism and republicanism. Where appropriate, across this chapter I also point to the relevance that each democratic approach may have for the

analysis of the three scholars of the information society – an analysis that I undertake in chapters two, three, and four of this dissertation.

Part I

The Liberal and Republican Traditions

The key distinction between the two traditions, especially as it pertains to this dissertation and to approaches to democracy in particular, has to do with the ideal relationship that individuals are expected to have with the democratic community. The liberal tradition prioritizes individual rights over communal rights. At its core, a liberal democracy is expected to protect and promote the right of individuals to design and lead their lives as they wish without having to align their actions with the general common good – unless of course they freely choose to do so. The republican tradition on the other hand begins from the opposite end of this spectrum: In most republican theories of democracy, achieving the common good plays at least an equal, if not greater, role than the pursuit of individual self-interest. For republicans, the common good represents the process of synthesizing the private wills of individuals into a common orientation that improves everyone's well-being. A republican democratic society may thus require strong concessions on individual freedom, since citizens are expected to think of their private interests in relation to the demands of the collective interest. In both liberal and republican approaches there are, of course, variations on the degree and extent of acceptable trade-offs between individual freedom and the public good.

I further discuss below some of the key tenets of liberalism and republicanism and explain how those give rise in turn to different understandings about the role of the individual, and of communication, in a democratic society.

The Liberal Tradition of Democracy

The primary principle of liberalism is the protection and promotion of freedom. Not freedom of any kind, that is, but particularly individual freedom. The focus on individual liberty rests on the normative understanding of the self as an autonomous being; it emerges from the belief that the self is an entity that pre-exists the development of a society. The operating principle of liberalism thus starts with the idea that any kind of political community – democratic community included – emerges from the free consent of its individual members.

To put it in Michael Sandel's (1984) words, liberal theory sees the individual as an "unencumbered" subject: individuals are self-determined, and do not necessarily need to look to others to understand who they are or what they want in life. The individual self is liberal, in other words, because he or she exists as a subject that is autonomous from society and its purposes. The goals of society – and in this sense also the idea of a good that can be collective rather than individualistic – do not concern the unencumbered individual. Caring for the common good, for the well-being of others, is of course someone's free choice, but it is not a fundamental obligation of citizenship; it may be something that one chooses to engage in, but not something that constitutes a foundational element of one's identity.

To put it a little differently, a liberal polity privileges what Isaiah Berlin (1969) describes as "negative" freedom – a freedom understood as the "ability" of individuals "to do as [they] wish" while being safe from "persecution" (p. 13) by others. In this sense, in liberal democracies the role of the government in public life is expected to be minimal. The liberal state operates as a Hobbesian Leviathan that provides a modicum of safety and social peace, both prerequisites that help maximize individual freedom – a freedom that is limitless, as long as it does not significantly harm the rights of others to a similarly free life. As Held (2006) notes in his analysis of liberal ideals of the state, for example, the government's presence in social life is legitimate when it can "safeguard the rights and liberties of citizens who are ultimately the best judges of their own interests" (p. 65). The state in other words, as Held observes, "must be restricted in scope and constrained in practice, in order to ensure the maximum possible freedom of every citizen" (p. 65).

For liberal theorists, democracy is an instrument – not a goal in itself – that should contribute to the "free development of individuality" (Held, 2006, p. 100) and, similarly, to the free expression of that individuality in the democratic public sphere. As a result, as Young (2000) remarks, liberals view democracy primarily as a decision-making process that "aggregates" individually held preferences in order to decide "what leaders, rules and policies will best correspond to the most widely and strongly held preferences" (p. 19). Liberal democrats consider individual preferences, to put it a little differently, as something that is "exogenous" and prior to "the political process" and do not expect that those "preferences may change as a result of interacting with others or participating in the political process" (p. 20).

Communication is thus not a necessary component of liberal democracies. Of course, in such democracies citizens may choose to communicate with others – with their peers or elected representatives – but they may also choose to abstain from communicating. Under the liberal approach communication is seen as a private process, as an individually-held capacity that can be employed at will. Communication under this model is thus not a "public right" but rather "a private privilege," as Glasser (1991, p. 9) argues. In turn, a liberal democracy is not something that takes place within the interstices of a public debate – it does not live in communication – but rather exists in the private minds of free individuals who may or may not choose to place their views under the test of public interaction with others.

In the next few pages, I discuss the two models that are most closely associated with the liberal tradition – the administrative and the pluralist models. I also briefly point to some of the ways in which each model relates to the subsequent analysis of Bell, Castells, and Benkler.

The Administrative Model

For administrative theorists the democratic public sphere is not a realm of robust citizen deliberation but rather a space that should efficiently display the different policies proposed by the elites who compete for the public's vote. In other words, administrative theorists view democracy as a bifurcated structure between a passive public and a governing technocratic and "administrative" elite. One of the best articulations of this model appears in the work of Joseph Schumpeter (1976), who suggested that "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the

people's vote" (p. 269). Or, in the words of Walter Lippmann (1991/1922) whose ideas align with the administrative model, democracy pertains to a governing system where the "number of those who govern is a very small percentage of those who are theoretically supposed to govern" (p. 228).

Drawing from the liberal tradition of political philosophy, administrative theorists suggest that individual citizens are self-interested beings. For Anthony Downs (1957), another scholar associated with this model, the democratic process is like an economic exchange between voters and the administrative technocrats, all of whom operate under the understanding that "all men act primarily out of self-interest" (p. 150). Under this view, it is not rational for non-elites to actively participate in political life because their effort and time investment would be disproportionate to the returns yielded by such an endeavor. It just doesn't make sense, in other words, for most people to participate in politics since they have better ways to spend their time – some private activity most likely, which yields higher returns in terms of personal pleasure, money earned, and so on. Thus under this model government should be left to the elites; it should be left into the hands of the technocratic specialists who have been trained, and who have a lot to gain from, approaching politics as a vocation, and who are evaluated by the voting public on the merits of their capacity to use their specialist knowledge towards the efficient and rational steering of society.

This model is most useful in the analysis of Daniel Bell, since the standard scholarly critique is that his work projects an image of a rising information society that is run by technocratic elites – by a small group of highly educated social planners who reduce democratic politics into a process of technically efficient administrative

governance. In the chapter on Bell, I show how his work incorporates but also exceeds some of the key aspects of the administrative model of democracy.

The Pluralist Model

The pluralist model of democracy is perhaps the most common in contemporary Western thought. It is not far-fetched to suggest that when we use the word *democracy* in colloquial discussions, especially in the US and in Northern Europe, we most likely mean a pluralist type of democracy. The ideas of pluralism are central to the analysis of all three of the information society scholars, exactly because they operate as the commonsensical background of typical liberal approaches to democracy. Additionally, all three scholars at some point in their work refer to, imply, or invoke in order to criticize, the image of a society that embraces key pluralist values such as individual freedom in conjunction with equality of "opportunity," as well as a view of the common good that emerges as an aggregation of individually-held opinions. I discuss below the basic philosophical scaffolding of this model.

Pluralist theorists view the democratic citizen in ways that are similar to the administrative model – as an individual who is primarily interested in protecting and improving self-interest. Active participation in politics is thus a decision that individuals make that is derived from a rational calculation; it depends on whether doing so significantly promotes one's private interest. Communication in the public sphere, it follows, is derivative of individual expression – communication between individual citizens, any form of citizen deliberation, is a private choice rather than a necessary requirement of a democratic society.

At the same time, the pluralist model differs from the administrative model because it presumes a lower barrier to individual access in public life. A good pluralist democracy should in other words be open and accessible to all. Individuals engage in politics inside a pluralist democracy mostly through their participation in political associations – with their involvement in political groups of like-minded individuals, which advocate for their members' individually-held yet coinciding demands from the state or other political institutions. An open and accessible pluralist system offers individuals a low barrier to participation, but it does not expect that such participation is necessary.

As one of the model's foremost proponents noted, Robert Dahl (2005), the "political arena" should be a sphere that is "easily penetrated" (p. 91), easily accessible to new and old political players. Such ease of access increases the level of competition between divergent interests that aim to "capture the chief elective offices of government" (p. 1010) Dahl observed. This competition, in turn, helps create a relative balance of power between conflicting social interests. Like a political tug of war where two or more teams pull on each side of a rope, competition produces an equilibrium of forces that ensures that no single group exercises complete control over society. As Dahl (2005) put it, pluralistic democracies operate as systems that have no identifiable "dominant center of influence" (p. 190).

The Republican Tradition of Democracy

The republican tradition has spawned various democratic models, but the two central ones – and the ones most relevant to the study of the democratic ideals of the

information society performed in this dissertation – are the civic and the direct models of democracy. What these models have in common is that they reject the primacy that liberals give to the idea of the individual, and consider instead the concept of the political community as the constitutive element of democratic life. The political community is understood, in other words, as one of the fundamental pillars of individual character development; as a necessary requirement of any individual's definition of the "good life." As such, republican models of democracy do not see politics as an epiphenomenon – as a process outside of individual goals – but rather as something that is part and parcel of a life well lived.

In Aristotle's (ca. 350 B.C.E/1994) terms, a philosopher who could be considered a precursor of republicanism, a good and fulfilling individual life is contingent upon one's participation in the community. The community, in other words, exists for Aristotle as a supportive element of individual life: "a state exists for the sake of the good life, not for the sake of life only," he suggested. Fast forward many centuries, moved by the ideals of Greek democracy as well as by the democratic processes of his hometown Geneva, Jean Jacques Rousseau developed one of the most compelling views of the republican tradition of thought. Unlike the classic liberalism of Thomas Hobbes, Rousseau argued that the very nature of man is inherently kind rather than competitive, and that it is society "that depraves him and makes him miserable" (as cited in Cohen, 2010, p. 13).

The way out of this misery, Rousseau suggested, is not by freeing oneself from society and from others, as liberals would suggest. Rather, the solution lies in finding a compromise between the needs of the self and the needs of the community; a good life is

in part dependent on one's participation in the commons. Instead of attempting to remain free from the interference of others, as liberals would propose, individuals should participate in public life and attempt to find a common ground between their private desires and the needs of others. An ideal society that mitigates public interest with private wills is what Rousseau described with the term "general will." As Joshua Cohen (2010) suggests about Rousseau's approach to the concept:

> In a society of the general will, citizens share an understanding of the common good and that understanding is founded on the members' commitment to treat one another as equals by refraining from imposing burdens that those members would be unwilling to bear themselves. Thus the content of the understanding of the common good reflects an equal concern for the good of each citizen; citizens take that shared understanding to be the ultimate basis of their political deliberations, and express it by jointly settling on the laws of their community. (p. 15)

In other words, Rousseau considers individual freedom to be a function of political participation. In this sense, republican theorists consider that being part of a community is not a matter of private choice; it is not a matter of mere volition, since individual identity – and the good life – is constituted through participation in the community. As Sandel (1984) notes, "to imagine a person incapable of republican attachments [to their community] is not to conceive of an ideally free and rational agent, but to imagine a person wholly without character, without moral depth" (p. 90). If community is an indispensable part of a person's moral character, then, any discussion about the self must take into account one's attachments to community. It should seriously

consider the ways in which interacting with others helps construct the moral center of the individual person.

The republican tradition consists of two approaches, the civic republican and the direct democracy models. I turn to a discussion of these models in the next few paragraphs.

The Civic Republican Model

In each of the chapters that follow, I explain how the work of all three information society scholars is congruent to the civic republican model democracy, especially because of the model's emphasis on civic communication as a central democratic process. Additionally, this model is relevant to all three scholars also because of its focus on ideas of politics as a form of affective expression. Here are below some of the main attributes of this approach to democracy.

The civic republican model considers the public sphere, and communication within it, as irreducible to an aggregation of individual preferences. Rather, it suggests that public opinion is formed in the public sphere through a process of deliberation that transforms, and does not merely add-up, private preferences. To put it a little differently, civic republicanism proposes that citizens "convey consent […] though a distinctively public judgment that may or may not coincide with the sum of the private choices individuals make in a pluralist or administrative democracy" (Christians et al., 2009, p. 101). In this model, those who rule did not get to where they are either because of their membership in an elite class (administrative model), or because they managed to bargain their way to the top (pluralist model). They became leaders because the public chose

them under conditions of free, inclusive, and egalitarian participation in the public sphere.

Civic republicans embrace the republican tradition's position that understands individuals to be neither detached nor disinterested in maintaining close connections to the community. Peers in the community are not irrelevant to an individual's life choices, these scholars argue, but rather form a meaningful web of relationships that at least in part determines a person's identity. Individuals realize the good life not only through introspection (as liberals would have it), but also through civic participation; both through monologue with the self, but also through a dialogue with the community. A good democracy is thus for civic republicans not just another system for social administration, but the necessary political ground for a society interested in "discovering and validating the most just policies" (Young, 2000, p. 17).

In this context, civic republicans also suggest that wide political participation should reflect a conscious "effort to ground democratic theory on the fact of heterogeneity rather than on an illusion of or hope for homogeneity" (p. i) as Danielle Allen (Young, 2011) observes. Rather than presuming that democracies can realize the liberal ideal of impartiality and the neutral moral point of view, civic-republicans establish democracy on the basis of cultural difference and consider democracy to be a social space that celebrates "social group differentiation, especially the experience derived from structural differentiation" (Young, 2000, p. 86). As Young notes, a "democratic public arrives at objective political judgment from discussion not by bracketing these differences, but by communicating the experiences and perspectives conditioned by them to one another" (p. 86). The chief political process that facilitates the

expression and celebration of such differences is – as I discuss more extensively in part II of this chapter – the communicative space of the public sphere.

The Direct Democratic Model

Finally, some of the central aspects of the direct democratic model, such as for example the idea of direct mass participation, of equality of result, and of politics as a form of struggle, appear in all three chapters that investigate the theories of the information society. I borrow key concepts from this model to unearth the Marxist thread in Bell's theory; to explicate Manuel Castells' view of politics as a form of social conflict; and to explain Benkler's adherence to the principle of equality of result.

The tradition of direct democratic thought is very broad, but one of the key theories through which I approach this model in this dissertation is Marxism (as do Christians et al., 2009 and Held, 2006). Of course, thinking about democracy as something that can adhere to Marxist theory may at first sound a bit paradoxical. In this day and age, we tend to conflate authoritarian versions of Marxism – Soviet-style communism for example – with more nuanced approaches to Marxism understood as a part of a broader tradition of republicanism that embraces democracy as the ideal form of government[1]. In this dissertation I embrace this latter version to Marxism, which in turn feeds into the direct model of democracy.

More specifically, the direct model is described by communication scholars (Christians et al., 2009) as such primarily because of the emphasis it places on the concept of direct citizen participation in governance. Most Western countries today have

[1] For an analysis of the relationship between Marxism and republicanism see Bruno Leopold's (2015) excellent dissertation length treatment on the matter, as well as Isaac (1990).

complex systems of representative democracy that obfuscate the citizens' voice and capacity to participate in public affairs, and in this sense representative systems undermine the very idea of democracy as a rule by the people. Instead, the proponents of the direct model suggest that we replace representation with a democratic system that "takes self-government literally," as Christians et al. (2009) note, and which helps "accentuate" an "unmediated involvement" of citizens "in public affairs" (p. 103).

Direct democratic models also draw from Marxist approaches to equality as a form of social end or result. In this view, democratic governments should not merely provide an equal playing field to their individual citizens – a form of equality of opportunity as liberals would have it – but rather ensure that all citizens enjoy an equal degree of social provisions regardless of the individual level of effort that they input towards achieving those provisions. An extreme version of this approach emerged in Communist societies where equality of result was (supposedly) achieved, but there are also milder versions – such as for example those applied by socialist democratic parties in some European countries (Sassoon, 2014) – that limit the concept of social equality to fundamental provisions such as healthcare and education and allow, in turn, for inequalities in other, less fundamental, areas of society.

Proponents of this model also disagree with liberals in relation to the place of private ownership in democratic politics. In the words of David Held (2006), this model treats "private ownership of the means of production" as "the key source of contemporary power"; in liberal democracies, however, this is a realm that is completely "*depoliticized*" and thus "arbitrarily treated as if it were not a proper subject of politics" (p. 103). Liberal democracies are for direct democrats, thus, not true to their name since within them the

locus of power lies in the private hands of the few who control the means of production – power remains in liberal democracies outside of the realm of political decision-making and outside the grasp of the general public.

Instead, direct democrats argue that democratic politics should be the site of vigorous struggle between opposing, and at times incommensurable, political and socioeconomic classes. This struggle requires that the public sphere, which they see as only one part of the broader political environment, is not merely a space of calm deliberation but rather a place of intense disagreement that contributes to the redistribution of the means of production, both material and cultural.

Part II

Standing Between Traditions: Communication as the Center of Democracy

The following pages delve into the work of scholars who stand in between liberalism and republicanism – mainly Jürgen Habermas (1990; 1993; 1994; 1996) and Iris Marion Young (2000; 2011). I also bring in the work of Chantal Mouffe (1999), Nancy Fraser (1990; 1995), and Hannah Arendt (1998), in order to further critique and nuance the theories of Young and Habermas. The theories of Young and Habermas allow me to explicate explain the democratic role of communication – a concept central to both – and to provide an understanding of how it can facilitate visions of a democratic society in which the liberal pursuit of private interest can coexist with republican approaches to the common good.

Habermas' (1994) democratic theory in fact blends the liberal tradition, which Habermas believes asks too little of democracy, with the republican tradition, which he

argues poses too large an " 'ethical overload' " (1994, p. 1) for democracy. His theory of democracy (1996) "takes" instead "elements from both sides and integrates them in the concept of an ideal procedure for deliberation and decision making" (p. 296). His theory thus stands apart, and at the same time commensurates between, "a liberal conception of the state as a guardian of an economic society" and a "republican concept of an ethical community institutionalized in the state" (1996, p. 296). The proper area of communication as the basis of democracy is for Habermas founded in the process of deliberation that takes place, ideally at least, in the autonomous space of civil society. A civil society is independent of both a republican understanding of the state as a moderator of public life, and of a liberal focus on the marketplace as the prime space of individual freedom expression. A civil society is "independent of public administration and market-mediated commerce," and "is assumed" as Habermas (1994) notes, "as a precondition for the praxis of civic self-determination" (p. 2).

Young's (2000; 2011) theory on the other hand stands more squarely within the civic-republican tradition and, while she does accept many of the foundational tenets in Habermas' deliberative democratic approach, she also expresses a commitment to a more vigorous, and at times oppositional, public sphere than Habermas would probably accept. While she avoids the requirement for prior unity between social classes of participants in the public sphere (eg.: see Barber, 1984), she also takes to task theories of deliberative democracy for not properly considering the structural inequalities inherent in liberal democratic systems. Hers (2011) is an approach that combines a deliberative democratic foundation with a diverse understanding of communication that takes many shapes and

forms – a communication that is not limited to rational argumentation and rather includes "political agitation and direct action protest" (p. 85).

To put these ideas into the broader context of this dissertation, in the chapters that follow I mobilize the idea of welding liberalism and republicanism – something that both Habermas and Young do to some extent – in order to excavate the democratic approaches that remain otherwise in the background of theories of the information society. I also utilize the distinction between rational and affective forms of communication[2] – a

[2] Across this dissertation I use the terms affect and emotion interchangeably. I draw my understanding of emotion primarily from the debate between Habermas (1990; 1993; 1996; 2006) and Iris Marion Young (2000; 2001; 2011), which in turn reflects broader differences between liberal and republican approaches to the role of emotional expression in political life.

Habermas embraces a Cartesian view to emotion as something that is distinguishable from cognitive processing. For Habermas, the mind and the body are two different systems that lead to different kinds of political communication in the public sphere. Drawing upon the work of Lawrence Kohlberg, and forming his argument on a Kantian universalist view of human subjectivity, he privileges rational over emotional forms of deliberation in the public sphere. In this view, that is, reason-based discourse forms the basis of a universal and impartial agreement about the validity of moral laws by all participants in the public sphere.

For Habermas emotion is an important attribute of an individual's private life, but it is not as significant as a form of political expression. When it comes to the public sphere, in other words, emotions are important as facilitators of citizen perspective taking, which operates as a communicative glue for democratic deliberation. Habermas describes this capacity as a form of "intersubjectivity" – as a capacity to develop an individual identity that is situated at least in part in relation to the identities of others in a community. Emotion is one of the foundations of perspective taking, but it is not a central form of expression in the public sphere.

One of Young's key disagreements with Habermas is about the limited role that the latter attributes to emotional forms of expression in the public sphere. Young situates the idea of emotion in contradistinction to Habermas' preference for discourse as dispassionate reason. She argues that preferring rationality over emotion masks socioeconomic and other kinds of inequality with a semblance of impartiality. Those who speak "rationally" in the public sphere, to put it differently, are also likely the most privileged since rational speech tends to be associated with elite education, higher socioeconomic status, and so on. Therefore, respecting the validity of emotional forms of political expression also leads for Young to the implicit exclusion of the voices of those most marginalized.

Both Habermas and Young see emotion primarily in the context of the cultural meaning it helps produce – as a signifier of cultural identity, and of power, in the public sphere. In this dissertation I follow primarily the political philosophy of these two scholars, and I do not engage with affect theory (eg.: Gregg & Seigworth, 2010; Massumi, 2002), which focuses among other things on a distinction between emotion and affect.

Affect theorists separate *affect* from *emotion* by seeing the former primarily as an attribute of the subconscious, and the latter as a conscious process embedded cultural practices of meaning production. Additionally, emotion is for these theorists an individual-level concept, while affect is a structural and non-individualistic concept. As Brian Massumi (2002) argues, "it is crucial to theorize the difference between affect and emotion" (p. 28). On the one hand, he notes, "emotion is a subjective content" and refers to the "socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience" – an experience that is "defined as personal." On

distinction that separates Habermas and Young – in order to further highlight the theory of psychology that permeates the normative canvas upon which Bell, Castells, and Benkler paint their images of a rising information society. I provide below a close analysis of the similarities and differences of Young's and Habermas' democratic approaches and help build thus a theoretical scaffolding that allows me to further investigate the democratic ideals in the work of mainstream theories of the information society.

Habermas and Communication

Seeing his work as a continuation of the Kantian project, Habermas proposes that social justice in modern democracies is to be found in the process of an inclusive deliberation between free and equal members of society. At the center of his theory stands a tripartite understanding of rationality – three kinds of justification one gives for their actions – that is divided into what he describes as the "pragmatic," "ethical," and "moral" questions that, as Rehg (Habermas, 1993) observes, are approaches that broadly follow Kant's formulation of reason as being "practically expedient, ethically prudent, and morally right" (p. vii).

On the most fundamental level of communication processes lies what Habermas calls practical reason. This refers to those cases in which we communicate arguments that are structured around the ideal of efficiency. Practical problems that everyone faces need

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the other hand, affect operates at least in part outside sociocultural signifiers. Affect has a nature that is "irreducibly bodily and autonomic" (p. 28), operating primarily beyond conscious reflection. Of course, this "doesn't mean" that sensation "disappears in the background," Massumi observes. Rather, "it means that it appears as the background against which conscious thought stands out: its felt environment" (p. 139).

to be addressed through a strategic kind of reasoning, Habermas suggests: "We must decide what to do when the bicycle we use every day is broken, when we are afflicted with illness, or when we lack the money necessary to realize certain desires" (1993, p. 2), for example. In such practical cases, he argues, we must make a "rational choice between different available courses of action in light of the task that we must accomplish if we want to achieve a certain goal" (p. 3). What characterizes this category thus is the employment of efficiency as the basis for of justifying one's actions. The decisions people make under this type of practical reasoning are, in other words, guided by considerations that aim to minimize one's practical costs and maximizes one's received benefits.

The second type of reason pertains to decisions people make about the good life, or what Habermas (1993) describes as ethical decision making. This category relates to decisions individuals make that are guided by private preference and internal desire – actions in this realm are guided and justified by the "*strong preferences*" that a person has and which "concern not merely contingent dispositions and inclination but the self-understanding of a person, his character and his way of life; they are inextricably woven," Habermas observes, with "each individual's identity" (p. 4). For example, this refers to cases when "someone who wants to become a manager of a publishing house might deliberate as to whether it is more expedient to do an apprenticeship first or go straight to college" (p. 4), Habermas observes. The proper domain of what the good life is, he argues, refers to decisions that we can answer ourselves, by following our proclivities and idiosyncrasies of character – by better understanding and tending to our personal needs. Such an ethical reasoning, he suggests, relates to making choices that affect one's life and

personal growth; they are the choices one makes that "are bound with one's 'inclinations' or interests," and refer to "what occupation would one find fulfilling, and so forth" (p. 4).

Finally, Habermas (1993) argues that rationality undergoes another "transformation as soon as [one's] actions affect the interests of others and lead to conflicts that should be regulated in an impartial manner, that is, from the moral point of view" (p. 5). This kind of moral reasoning requires that individual incorporates the perspective of others and, thus, also means that then other two types of reasoning – practical and ethical reasoning – are inappropriate in such cases where one's actions involve or affect others. Moral reasoning is developed exactly through a "radical shift in perspective," from deciding "egocentrically" and in "accordance" with one's "own interests" to making decisions that take under serious consideration how one's moral "maxims" are compatible with the "maxims of others" (p. 6). In other words, moral issues are resolved for Habermas through a rational-based reason giving that incorporates the key moral values of others.

Taken together, these three types of reasoning indicate the ways in which Habermas blends liberalism with republicanism. On the one hand, Habermas argues that the rules of social justice emanate from a priority of the right over the good [3] – moral reasoning goes beyond and supersedes he argues, the Aristotelian priority of the good life over the right life. On the other hand, Habermas considers that interaction and perspective taking – an ability to understand others – is key to the discovery of universal moral rules. Thus, Habermas' theory breaks from the classic monological character of liberalism, which suggests that one can arrive at universal moral rules through an

[3] On this matter of the liberal morality of the right versus the good, see: Rawls (1988)

introspective process of impartial discovery. Rather than accepting a classic Rawlsian position, in other words, which points to the solitary thinker who stands behind a veil of ignorance, and who can rationally decide what the right thing to do is, Habermas proposes that moral reason is instead located within a rational discourse that takes place between equal interlocutors, and which is performed on the basis of mutual understanding.

For Habermas (1996) rational deliberation allows citizens to co-develop a system of moral rules that in turn binds everyone within the community. A society is democratic, it follows, when it produces its social norms through inclusive and rational deliberation in the independent space of the public sphere; when it embraces the idea that morally binding rules are produced under conditions in which "all possibly affected persons could agree as participants in rational discourses" (p. 106). From this brief yet rich sentence we can point to Habermas' (1996) core belief about the importance of democratic discourse: Binding norms, universal moral rules, can only be legitimate if they have been arrived at through a democratic discourse in which people are "motivated solely by the unforced force of the better argument" (p. 306); people will accept a moral rule, in other words, because they have debated it and have been rationally convinced about the validity of its premises.

To be sure, participants in the democratic public sphere are not supposed to make arguments that aim only to improve their private interest. They should not, as Habermas (1993) put it, "seek to *influence* the behavior of another" for personal gain. Rather, each participant should aim to "*rationally*…*motivate* another by relying on the illocutionary binding/bonding effect (*Bindungseffect*)" (p. 58) – by relying, to put it a little differently,

on the natural human ability to rationally empathize with others. Formulating a great part of his approach on Mead's theory of perspective taking, Habermas sees mutual understanding – or "intersubjectivity" as he (1990) calls it – as one of the foundational elements of his theory of deliberative democracy. This concept refers to the innate capacity that humans have to both reason and empathize with others and stems, Habermas argues, from the inevitable realization of our "simultaneous" entanglement "in a densely woven fabric of mutual recognition, that is, of reciprocal vulnerability" (p. 199).

Young's and Habermas' Communication Theory: Points of Convergence and Divergence

In many ways Young's (2000; 2011) approach to democracy can be seen as an addition to Habermas' theory. Her understanding of a communicative democracy takes on the task of reconciling Habermas and other liberal-leaning deliberative democrats (see Dryzek, 2000; Fiskin, 2009) with a more substantive understanding of the principle of inclusion as a form of celebration of cultural difference. For the interest of brevity, in the next few paragraphs I present Young's theory in light of its similarities and differences to Habermas' approach to deliberative democracy.

Points of Convergence

Both Young and Habermas distinguish their theories from the liberal models of democracy. At the center of their work they place a belief in democracy as a space where citizens congregate to meaningfully discuss the issues of the polity, where they come together to publicly expose their grievances, and where they try to find common ways to

proceed with the political problems that may arise. While reaching consensus is desirable and something that participants "must be aiming to reach," neither Habermas nor Young believe that it is "a requirement of deliberative reason" (Young, 2000, p. 24).

Young and Habermas consider that deliberation does not only legitimize democratic procedures because of the wide inclusion it presumes, but that it also has an educative effect, transforming the pre-political and private opinions of citizens into opinions that, after discussion, seriously embrace the perspectives of others. Through the process of public discussion, as Young (2000) notes, "people often gain new information, learn of different experiences of their collective problems, or find that their own initial assumptions are founded on prejudice or ignorance" (p. 26). In this sense, orienting oneself to learning from the other enlarges the basis of social understanding upon which democracy can rest. Similarly, as I mentioned earlier, Habermas also understands deliberation as a transformative practice of orienting oneself from self-interest to mutual understanding.

For Young (2000), the ideal deliberative model consists of four central principles, which bear close resemblance to Habermas' discourse principle. Those principles are "inclusion, political equality, reasonableness and publicity" (p. 17). As she concisely but eloquently notes, a combination of these principles serves to link democracy with social justice: "under ideal conditions of inclusive political equality and public reasonableness, democratic processes serve as the means of discovering and validating the most just policies" (p. 17). In other words, in Young's formulation, a democracy that is deliberative, inclusive, reasonable, and equal, paves the way for a political life that is

consonant with the ideal approach to a good society for all – a society that respects and promotes, in other words, the common good.

As Young (2000) sees it, the public sphere is a space where participants accept that "they must try to explain their particular background experiences, interests, or proposals in ways that others can understand" and that they must do so by expressing reasons "for their claims in ways that others recognize could be accepted, even if in fact they disagree with the claims and reasons" (p. 25). Young agrees thus with Habermas that at the center of a proper democracy lies a form of communication that is based on reason giving, perspective taking, and mutual understanding.

Points of Divergence

At the same time, Young (2011) focuses also on ideas of communication and deliberation as seen through the concept of heterogeneity and cultural difference – ideas that are relatively absent in Habermas' key works. For Young, democratic deliberation cannot be detached from issues of difference; deliberation is "not abstract" she notes "from the partiality of affiliation, of social or group perspective, [that] constitutes concrete subjects" (p. 100). A such, Young places at the heart of her model of communicative democracy the need to:

> draw on social group differentiation, especially the experience derived from structural differentiation, as a resource. A democratic process is inclusive not simply by formally including all potentially affected individuals in the same way but by attending to the social relations that differently position people and condition their experiences, opportunities, and knowledge of the society. A democratic public arrives at objective political judgment from discussion not by

> bracketing these differences, but by communicating the experiences and perspectives conditioned by them to one another. (p. 86)

Young's theory is therefore also suggests that a public sphere is inclusive only when it accepts and celebrates heterogeneity in all its forms. Rather than being seen under a Habermasian lends of equality-as-homogeneity, Young proposes that deliberation in the public sphere should welcome instead all possible differences in expression, opinion, and lifestyle that taken together constitute the diversity of a genuine democratic society.

Debunking the Primacy of Argumentation. For Young, thus, inclusive democratic communication means overcoming the internal exclusions that come attached to the presumption that democratic deliberation is performed between a homogeneous public. One of those exclusions comes in the form of privileging argumentation over other forms of communication. While "argument constitutes the primary form of political communication" Young (2000) notes, "there are reasons to be suspicious of privileging argument, and especially certain interpretations of what good argument means, over other forms of communication" (p. 37). That is, while being articulate is a central tenet of a model of democracy founded on communication, at the same time, argumentative styles are correlated with a certain social class, gender, and race. Those more educated, for example, are probably also the most articulate and they can exert, in turn, a subtle influence on the table of deliberation by intimidating others with their eloquence. "'Articulateness is culturally specific" (p. 38), Young notes, arguing that a truly inclusionary communicative democracy requires that all other forms of communication – not just rational argumentation – are equally accepted as legitimate.

Theories of deliberation that privilege a form of "speech that is dispassionate and disembodied," in other words, construct a false correlation between identifying "objectivity with calm and the absence of emotional expression" (Young, 2000, p. 39). Bringing different forms of communication (not only different perspectives) into deliberation, and treating them as equal to cool and rational talk, points to a democracy that truly celebrates social difference. Rather than asking participants to adhere to one predetermined form of communication as rational argumentation, a just deliberation invites them instead to share their perspectives and lived experiences in forms that "include politicized art and culture – film, theater, song, and story," and which move public communication from a paradigm based on orderly practice to one that is "messy, many-leveled, playful, [and] emotional" (p. 168).

For Young, advocating for the celebration of cultural difference as a foundational element of democracy is derived from a broader understanding of the nature of the self as a product of culture; it begins from a conviction that human identity takes shape, at least in part, through the combination of a particular set of historical, material, and symbolic relationships that surround the individual. The self is not detached from material space, or from the activities and the flows of social power; rather, it is a product of these processes. Identities are neither pure nor common, but rather "fragmented and fractured" (p.4) to borrow Stuart Hall's (1996) phrase; they are immersed in culture, negotiated and restructured through the constant flow of social interaction, and are "subject to a radical historization […] constantly in the process of change and transformation" (p. 4). A citizen's identity is in this case, as Hall observes, "constantly invoked" and "constructed through, not outside, difference" (p. 4).

The republican approach that Young embraces strongly disagrees, in other words, with the liberal view of identity as something that deep down can be homogeneous and universal – it disagrees with the liberal hope, in the critical words of Charles Taylor (1992), that can be "a neutral ground on which people of all creeds can meet and coexist" (p. 62). For Young, identities are fundamentally different because they are shaped by one's personal experiences, and by the cultural narratives associated with one's race, gender, and socioeconomic status. The liberal "claims to impartiality," Young (2011, p. 10) argues, mask elements of cultural difference and "feed," in turn, "cultural imperialism by allowing the particular experience and perspective of privileged groups to parade as universal" (2011, p. 10).

Politics as Struggle. Additionally, Young embraces an understanding of democracy as a practice that does not exclude the concept of struggle. Democracy is for Young an arena in which ideological positions between groups may appear staunchly oppositional, at times even incommensurable. Diverging from the theory of Habermas in this way, Young brings into her work elements of an "agonistic" democracy, as Chantal Mouffe (1999) has best described it.

Mouffe's (1999) own conception of agonistic democracy identifies the blind spots of liberal-leaning deliberative models (such as Habermas'), especially in their inability to incorporate the fact that "power is constitutive of social relations" (p. 753). While Mouffe accepts that rational forms of deliberation can help society reach a consensus on many issues, she notes that such theory "is unable to acknowledge the dimension of antagonism that the pluralism of values entails and its ineradicable character (p. 752). If social relationships are power relationships, she suggests, then democratic processes should

reflect the idea that social groups are in fact differential and hold views that are potentially incommensurable. What Mouffe suggests, thus, is constructing a democratic polity that is located in the "recognition and legitimation of conflict and the refusal to suppress it," and aims as its "prime task […] not to eliminate passions nor to relegate them to the private sphere in order to render national consensus possible, but to mobilize those passions towards the promotion of democratic designs" (pp. 755-756).

As Young (2000) notes, citing Hannah Arendt's (1998) work, the ease with which some theorists (such as Habermas) view deliberation in the public sphere as calm and orderly procedure is disconcerting. For "Arendt," Young argues, "the public is not a comfortable place of conversation among those who share language, assumptions, and ways of looking at issues" (p. 111). Rather, it is a place of contestation and of difficult truths. A view of the public sphere as a place where everyone is impartial and where they can leave behind their "differences in order to uncover the common good destroys the very meaning of publicity because it aims to turn the many into one," Young adds (p. 111).

It is under such a political lens that Young offers a substantive revision of Habermas' model of communication that can account for the principle of inclusion that is based on the idea of a "politics of difference" (2000; 2011). Without denying the centrality of argumentation and factual-based reasoning in public discussion, a truly inclusive deliberative democracy should also take into account, Young suggests, processes of public communication that go beyond rationality –processes such as "greeting," "rhetoric" and "narrative," which I discuss below.

Young's Communicative Democracy: Greeting, Rhetoric and Narrative

Young (2000) proposes a set of "communicative gestures" (p. 57) that can work as a guideline for a practical application to her democratic approach. Rather than intending to displace Habermas, she looks to enlarge the scope of a democratic "theory of communicative action" that is "grounded in everyday communicative ethics" (p. 59) by "explicitly acknowledging social differentiations and divisions and encouraging differently situated groups to give voice to their needs, interests, and perspectives on the society in ways that meet the conditions of reasonableness and publicity" (p. 119). These communicative gestures are for Young greeting, rhetoric, and narrative.

Through greeting, participants acknowledge each other by including "literal greetings such as 'Hello' or 'How are you'" but also "mild forms of flattery, stroking of egos, deference and politeness" (2000, p. 58). Greeting is meant to be a starting point to a process of communication that recognizes the "irreducible particularity" of the other in the political debate and is an acknowledgement of the bodily vulnerabilities that come attached to a deliberation situated within real-life conditions.

Greeting as a form of communication reveals Young's links to feminist scholarship, which reframes political life as a form of human vulnerability. As Judith Butler (2006) suggests for example, "vulnerability to the other" is a "part of bodily life," and of politics that we "cannot will away." Rather we "must attend to it, even abide by it, as we begin to think about what politics might be implied by staying with the thought of corporeal vulnerability, a situation in which we can be vanquished or lose others" (p. 29; see also: Fraser, 1990; Povinelli, 2011). Young adds to the realm of politics an approach

that recognizes, and reaffirms, the corporeal realities, and the bonding with others, that political life entails.

Additionally, Young (2000) proposes rhetoric as a form of communication that transcends an argumentation based on "dispassionate, culturally and stylistically neutral arguments that focus the mind on their evidence and logical connections rather than the heart and engage the imagination" (p. 63). Rhetoric signifies a capacity to engage emotion rather than only the intellect; it is an invitation to use the full communicative toolkit that humans may have in order to motivate the other and to stimulate the process of mutual understanding.

Rhetoric stands in stark difference to the Enlightenment roots of Habermasian theory, by accepting that different forms of communication, such as a heated debate, can have a positive outcome for democracy. She disagrees with the dominant deliberative approach, in other words, that suggests that the public in a democracy should come to decisions by engaging in a cool, careful, and rational consideration of reality. As Peters and Cmiel (1991) observe, such an aversion to emotional forms of deliberation is founded on a "fear that the passions of a heated argument will drive out the prospect of a reasonable collective discussion" (p. 206), and in the distrust of emotion because it can easily lead to "passionate violence" (p. 207).

However, as Young (2000) suggests, delimiting debate to an impartial deliberation actually blocks the capacity of moving from "reason to judgment," and undermines the possibility of coming to a "judgment together" (p. 69). Rhetoric does not exclude rational argumentation; rather, it buttresses it by helping people decide with both

their hearts and minds, by providing the "contextual and motivational grounds for choosing between rationally acceptable positions" (p. 70).

To the purpose of a debate that is grounded on both reason and emotion also helps what Young (2000) describes as the process of narrative. Narrative is not about simply publicizing a story for the benefit of entertainment or personal projection. Rather, narrative is about telling a story that makes a political point – one that "demonstrates, describes, explains or justifies something to others in an ongoing political discussion" (p. 72). Storytelling evokes emotional responses by those who listen, thereby allowing them to better understand the actual and lived conditions of distant and different others.

Narrative also helps "counter the pre-understandings" that others have, the stereotypes and presumptions that people bring as intellectual baggage, when they enter a democratic debate in the public sphere. Young's narrative in this sense foments mutual understanding on the basis of the sharing of one's lived experience. A real life narrative that is situated in the discussion of one's personal experience operates as a check on all those who may be tempted to use impartial language to curb the legitimacy of the voices of the less educated and most marginalized – it operates as an protection to those who "rely on the apparent unassailability of […] technical discourse to produce the appearance of good reasons for flimsy conclusions" (p. 79), as Young suggests.

Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter, I discussed the key democratic models that emerge from the liberal and republican traditions of democracy: the administrative and pluralist, and the civic and direct models of democracy. In the second part of this chapter, I delved

into the analysis of Habermas' and Young' theories of democracy, suggesting that their theories blend liberalism with republicanism primarily through the concept of communication. Habermas amalgamates liberalism's rational universalism with republicanism's focus on the communal good when he produces a model of democracy situated on communal deliberation that is based on reasoned argumentation. Young qualifies Habermas' theory by arguing in favor of an inclusionary democracy that embraces cultural differentiation and which is realized through multiple forms of affective expression within the public sphere.

Taken together, the theories of Young and Habermas help identify two foundational and interrelated concepts of democracy that are also central to this dissertation: first, the idea that communication is the moral center of a democratic society. Second, the suggestion that different kinds and degrees of affective expression – empathy as a form of mutual understanding for Habermas, and a diverse pallet of emotional expression for Young – are a structural component of the democratic public sphere. As I show in the chapters that follow, communication, and an affective-centered democratic citizenship, are two democratic values that also emerge in the work of Bell, Castells, and Benkler – values that in turn allow these scholars to paint a picture of a rising information society in which individual freedom can appear commensurate with the good of the collective.

CHAPTER 2

Welding Marxism and Liberalism in Bell's Model of Democracy

Scholars have critiqued Daniel Bell for delivering a technocratic image of the postindustrial society (eg.: Hill, 1974; Ferkiss, 1979; Kumar 1978). They note that, by placing the technical intelligentsia – the scientists, engineers, and researchers – at the top of the social structure, he subordinates political and moral questions to the realm of technical solutions that are to be provided by the highly-educated elites. The democratic ideals of this society resemble, in other words, the administrative model of democracy, which is a political structure that accords decision-making power to the elites and expects minimal participation from the general public.

As I suggest in this chapter, the technocratic reading of Bell's postindustrial society ignores the complex, and at times conflicting, democratic ideals present in his work. As they are laid out in the first edition of his book (1973), the democratic values of the postindustrial society constitute a hybrid that borrows from both liberal and republican traditions – two traditions with significantly different understandings of the role of the individual in a democratic society. The liberal tradition considers the 'free-wheeling' and 'self-interested' individual to be the legitimate center of a democratic society. The republican tradition privileges on the other hand the primacy of the collective good over that of the individual. As I show in this chapter, and contrary to prior scholarly assumptions, Bell constructs his hybrid democratic model by capitalizing on the dialectic tension between individualism and collectivism – by sublimating those tensions with the development of an ideal "communal" (p. 488) postindustrial society in which

free and self-governing individuals are also oriented towards each other and towards the public good.

Unlikely as it may seem, Bell's model shares some of its ideals with the Habermasian model of democracy, which also stands between the liberal and republican traditions. Both Habermas and Bell imagine the ideal democratic society as founded upon an individual psychological orientation towards others – they internalize into the individual psyche the republican (and Marxist) imperative of solidarity with the collective. In both Bell and Habermas, it is the relationship between self-governing, yet socially responsible and outward looking, individuals that lends legitimacy to the democratic infrastructures of society – to institutions such as the state or even to the corporate sector. The crucial difference between the two, on the other hand, is that Bell imagines the ideal community to be meritocratic, as he accepts the presence of a hierarchical scaffolding of persons and institutions within the postindustrial society.

The key concept that I mobilize to unravel the complicated democratic aspects of the postindustrial society is that of "theoretical knowledge." More particularly, I show how Bell's understanding of theoretical knowledge is amenable to two different interpretations: theoretical knowledge can be understood as (a) a form of technical expertise, but also (b) as a concept that reflects an ideal form of community. Focusing on the latter interpretation, I argue, helps shed a more nuanced light onto the hybrid democratic ideals that permeate Bell's postindustrial society. Through an analysis of his key metaphors, an examination of his overall argument, style, and approach, as well as a placement of his work within the relevant historical and cultural academic context, I

show how Bell's democratic ideals are informed by a culturally- and historically- specific blend of democratic traditions.

In its most common interpretation, I suggest, theoretical knowledge represents a technical capacity – usually possessed by scientists, engineers, and researchers – to rearrange social resources towards increasing levels of efficiency. Understood this way, the adoption of theoretical knowledge represents the continuation of the Taylorist model of scientific management – it is a continuation that expands this model of organizing production from the factory floor to the rest of the economy and society. From this perspective, Bell's critics were right. Applying such technical thinking to the economy and expanding it to other realms of society tacitly reallocates political power – the power to arrange society's economic resources – to the educated elites.

However, when Bell suggests that theoretical knowledge is at the center of the postindustrial society, he also takes that as a shorthand for a model of social relationships that mirror the ideal academic community. As Bell (1973) suggests in the Coda of his book: "One can say that the scientific estate – its ethos and its organization – is the monad that contains within itself the imago of the future society" (p. 378). Theoretical knowledge in other words pertains to a way of life, a way to relate to others beyond the confines of academia. In the postindustrial society, the model of the academic community – its ethos and its organization – does not remain the privilege of the few educated elites but extends outwards towards the general public.

As I show in Part I of this chapter, Bell's argument is not a unicorn of its time; rather, it is in conversation with works in the broader area of postindustrial studies (eg.: Gouldner, 1979; Touraine, 1971) that in many ways also struggled to reconcile Marxism

with American liberalism. This scholarly tradition offers the intellectual and cultural background upon which Bell developed an approach that supplants a Marxist emphasis on economic materialism with an emphasis on communication as the basis of the postindustrial society.

In the first part of the chapter, I introduce the work of scholars who worked within the postindustrial society paradigm and who were Bell's intellectual peers, such as Alvin Gouldner and Alain Touraine. Bell's (1973, p. 39) acknowledges and separates his work from Touraine's (1971), and Gouldner (1979) too positions his work in relation to Bell and Touraine (pp. 6, 95). Furthermore, Gouldner and Bell knew each other as they were both part of the "New York intellectuals" – a group that left its distinct mark on twentieth century American cultural and political thought (see: Jumonville, 1991; Phelps, 1997).

Introducing these scholars helps illuminate the work of Bell vis à vis leftist thought at the time, since both Gouldner and Touraine write from within the Marxist paradigm. Additionally, discussing the work of Touraine helps build a bridge between this and the following chapter, since Touraine was Castells' primacy PhD advisor during his years of study in Paris.

In Part II of this chapter, I preform a close reding of Bell's work in order to explore the ways in which he places a certain understanding of community at the center of his postindustrial society. Through an analysis of his use of metaphors such as the historical "shift" from "economizing" to "sociologizing" (p. 282) modes, as well as his oft-used metaphor about a postindustrial society being a "game between persons" (pp 30-31), I argue that for Bell, theoretical knowledge transforms society into a space in which human communication reconciles the otherwise opposing forces of private- and public-

interest. Through a close at these metaphors I point to how Bell amalgamates the conflicting liberal ideal of self-interested individualism with the republican ideal of an individual life that is oriented towards the common good. I tend to a close analysis of the ways in which Bell imagines the ideal academic community and illustrate how he extends this model to the rest of society. In the final part of this chapter I discuss the commonalities between Bell's approach and Habermas' theory of democracy as a blend between republican and liberal ideals.

PART I

The Intellectual Environment Leading Up to Bell's Postindustrial Society

The New York Intellectuals

Amidst the great depression and at age 13, Daniel Bell "the son of garment workers" (Chernow, 1979, p. 12), decided to enter the New York chapter of the Young People's Socialist League. At a time before the Cold War, a period when factories were closing and unemployment was rampant, socialism, with its call for equality and focus on labor, was becoming quite popular even in capitalist America. Despite joining a Marxist group, Bell quickly became disheartened by the dominant strand within it, Bolshevism, which declared that the road to equality should be realized through violent revolution. Rather than discrediting Marxist theory, however, Bell gravitated towards the less prevalent Menshevik strand, which advocated that social change could be achieved through a non-violent path – through a politics of compromise between the labor and the bourgeoisie.

A few years later, in 1935, Bell enrolled in the City College of New York by the time of his graduation in 1937 Alvin Gouldner would also enroll (Chriss, 2001). Bell and Gouldner became personally acquainted initially through their involvement in the group of New York intellectuals. As Jumonville (1991) notes, the first generation of scholars within that group "came into maturity into the 1920s and 1930s" (p. 8) and was spearheaded by Sidney Hook – a famous social democrat and pragmatist philosopher (who also appears in the subsequent chapter on Castells). Some other members of the first generation included Lionell Trilling, Dwight Macdonald, Philip Rahv, Lewis Coser, Clement Greenberg, and Mary McCarthy. The second generation of this group came into maturity during the fifties and sixties and included scholars who also became central to the contours of American cultural criticism, as well as in sociology and political science, such as Irving Kristol, Alfred Kazin, Nathan Glazer, Irving Howe, Seymour Martin Lipset, and of course Daniel Bell and Alvin Gouldner.

The New York intellectuals have a history that is worth studying[4]. The key point in relation to this dissertation is, however, that during the thirties the group members engaged in heated debates about the merits of different strands within Marxism. Gathering in the "well-known lunchroom alcoves" (Clark, 2005, p. 36) of the City University of New York, "Marty Lipset and Daniel Bell" would "debate with the Alvin Gouldners and Irvin Kristols (sic)" (p. 36), about Stalinism and Trotskyism and the proper application of Marxist theory to the analysis of American society[5].

Following his earlier instincts, Bell sided with the moderate Trotskyist wing. In fact, Bell's exposure to the City College debates could only solidify his conviction that

[4] And many indeed have. See for example Jumonville (1991); Wald, (2017).
[5] For an explication of the political context of these debates, see also Phelps, (1997, p. 22).

violent revolt cannot be the answer for the development of a more equitable society. Particularly, Bell was antithetical to Stalinism's disregard for democracy – an antithesis that brought him even closer to the "right wing of the Socialist Party" (Brick, 1986, p. 60), which considered democracy to be the foundation of any legitimate revolutionary proposition within the broader Marxist paradigm.

The New York group of intellectuals performed something that was central to Bell's later work: They brought to the fore the idea of adapting Marxist theory to the analysis of a liberal American society. As a stream of thought, this blend of Marxism with liberalism appeared contemporaneously with the broader growth of the social democratic wing of Marxism in American intellectual life. That wing was not Bell's to claim or lead, of course; it embodied an approach that was embraced by "several social theorists of the thirties who – along with Mumford, Lynd, Dewey, and Niebhur" attempted to straddle "a tenuous balance between liberalism and Marxism," between "private thought and collective action," and between "individual freedom and the search for community" (p. 20), as Jumonville (1991), suggests.

One of the early leaders of the social democratic wing was Sidney Hook, who was John Dewey's student and also Daniel Bell's mentor during his early years at the *New Leader* – a periodical that was perceived at the time as the "leading organ of right wing social-democracy" and which was "sponsored by the Social Democrats Federation" (Phelps, 1997, p. 195)[6]. During the thirties, and following Dewey's steps, Hook became increasingly worried with what he considered as a growing encroachment of Stalinist

[6] It is also worth noting that Bell dedicated his book *The End of Ideology* to Sidney Hook. For more information on Bell's involvement with the *New Leader* see also: Brick (1986, p. 56); Jumonville (1991, p. 212).

interpretations of Marxism within American thought (Bullert, 2013). The solution, Hook believed, was not rejecting Marxism but rather imbricating it within broader liberal versions of American pragmatism. In many ways aligned with other social democrats of the thirties, Hook's approach blended individualistic liberal values such as "flexibility" and "action" (Phelps, 1997, p. 9) with more collective (and Marxist) values of an "egalitarian and participatory" society (p. 15). Similarly, as Ferriter (2017) suggests, Hook's theory of democracy facilitated between the individualistic values of "intrinsic worth or dignity" and the more socialist values of "diversity and variety" (Hook as cited in Ferriter, 2017, p. 94).

The "Deradicalization" of the American Intellectual Scene

Sidney Hook's and John Dewey's embrace of the middle ground between liberalism and Marxism was perhaps a preamble of things to come in American intellectual life. Historians have in fact documented a wide shift towards the political middle in the fifties, which they have described as the process of "deradicalization" (Brick, 1986, p. 4) of American scholarship – a process that was signposted by the gradual reformation, and adaptation, of radical political ideas into theoretical frameworks that are consonant with the moderate values of a "realist liberalism" (p. 4). This process of deradicalization was motivated at least in part by the growing disillusionment of American intellectuals with Marxist theory, coupled with the widely-held ascription of the West's postwar economic prosperity to moderate values and process of liberal capitalism. This move to the political center was aptly captured by Arthur Schlesinger's (1949) *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom*, which was a book that celebrated the

American midcentury values of "moderation and […] piecemeal reform" (Wreszin, 1984, p. 272), and located the West's prosperous future not in radical and revolutionary Marxist ideas, nor in extreme libertarian individualism, but rather in the redistributive capacities of a socially responsible capitalist system and the defense of "democratic ideas […] against both right and left" (p. xx).

An example of this movement towards deradicalization and its associated anti-totalitarian mold, is evident in the participation of a wide variety of intellectuals, including Daniel Bell, in the Future of Freedom conference that was held in Milan in 1955 (Brick, 1986, p. 5). The conference was organized under the auspices of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, an organization that was a spinoff of Hook's and Dewey's earlier Committee for Cultural Freedom (Jumonville, 1991, p. 34). The Milan conference aimed to revitalize American scholarship by bringing together intellectuals who could develop a response to totalitarian thinking and stimulate the production of liberal and progressive thought that opposed the Stalinist overtaking of Europe. The conference was expected, to put it a little differently, to connect intellectuals in America and Europe who aimed to overcome the bipolar "ideology of the cold war" (Brick, 1986, p. 5). These were the uniting principles that brought together scholars who would otherwise be considered today as ideologically opposed (Pells, 1985) : S.M. Lispet and Hannah Arendt, Irving Kristol and Michael Polanyi, Raymond Aron and Daniel Bell, to name a few.

As Bell put it, it was in the Milam conference that the "ideas of Aron, Michael Polanyi, Edward Shils, C.A.R. Crossland, and Seymour Martin Lipset, and myself found common ground" (as cited in Scott-Smith, 2002, p. 444). The ideas that Bell refers to

point to the emergence the idea of "the end of ideology" – an approach that signified the hope at the time that "reformist politics of social democracy" could be successfully blended with "the maintenance of economic growth" and " an ethics of egalitarianism" that would become in turn "the means to confront the Marxist image of a better, more equal and productive society" (Scott-Smith, 2002, p. 442).

In the same vein, and in the same year that the conference took place, Daniel Bell edited a volume that included scholars such as S. M. Lipset and R. Hofstadter. The volume was called *The New American Right*, and its writers "articulated many of the same themes" (Oliver, 1999, p. 604) that Bell's later books expanded upon. Writers of this volume argued that the analysis of American politics should turn away from the Marxist theories of society as a struggle between classes. "American political behavior," they noted, "was too complex a phenomenon to be read successfully through a class lens" (p. 604). Instead, American society should be understood as structure that cuts across classes; as a combination of individuals who do not see themselves as part of either labor or the bourgeoisie but rather experience their place the distinctions that emerge from individually-based "status concerns" (p. 604).

Some core members of the New York intellectuals such as Lipset, Hofstadter, and Kristol, were later on associated with what became known as the school of neoconservatives. Bell is still today considered by some as an integral member of that group, which emphasizes the value of small governance and the centrality of Anglo-Saxon identity in modern American culture. But as Brick (1986) notes, Bell distanced himself from the group before its most prominent and most conservative phase took place, which happened during the Reagan era in the nineteen-eighties. Indeed, even early

on, and while he was an influential member of the group, Bell's views were considered by many of his peers as outliers to neoconservatism, especially because of his continued advocacy for the role of the state in a democratic society (Waters, 1996). For that reason, Bell never considered himself, or was considered by others inside the group, as a hardcore neoconservative. He was rather perceived as a moderate, as a more "conservative socialist than many of the other young New York intellectuals" (Jumonville, 1991, p. 212) of his time.

The Columbia Sociology Department: Bell and Gouldner

Apart from the New York "group's early mastery of Marxism after the war in the 1930s" and their later "synthesis of Marxist and liberal analysis into the mainstream" (Jumonville, 1991, p. 9), there is another intellectual center that affected the thought of Bell as well as Gouldner: the department of sociology at Columbia University. The commonplace critique against the department has been, as Clark (2005) notes, that its faculty sold out to capitalist values by preforming market-oriented types of research; that while their roots were Marxist, scholars in that department embraced America's capitalist status quo all too uncritically. Seen from a historical distance, however, it is clear today that the work of the Columbia sociology department did not disavow Marxism, but rather sought to adapt some of its key tenets into the analysis of a pluralist American society.

The work of Columbia sociology scholars, and especially that of Lazarsfeld and Merton, as Clark (2005) argues convincingly, "helped create modern sociology through a continuous dialogue, albeit often latent, with Marxist themes and concepts" (p. 23). Their approach in other words helped produce a middle ground between "Marxism and

individualism" (p. 24) by creatively oscillating between concepts such as "class" and "individual," "power elites" and "pluralism," "workers" and "consumers" (p. 27), and so on. The presence of this middle ground became in turn one of the intellectual foundations of Daniel Bell's theory of the postindustrial society. Standing between the values of Marxism and individualism, that is, the "Columbia armory of ideas resonated with," and "had an elective affinity with, post-industrial society" (p. 27), as Clark observes

What the Columbia sociologists did was to bring their Marxist training and framework to the study of the liberal subject. They thus helped construct a common ground that applied Marxism into liberalism, and which combined Marxism's focus on materialist relations with liberalism's focus on immaterial relations. To put it a little differently, the middle ground between Marxism and liberalism meant that the Columbia school of sociologists would apply Marxism's view of society as alienation not to the study of the materialist concept of class, but to the immaterial concept of the individual subject. Columbia scholars were interested to unveil, therefore, the ways in which Marxist forms of alienation could take place within a pluralistic society such as America.

Consider for example how in their 1948 paper "Mass Communication, Popular Taste, and Organized Social Action," Merton and Lazarsfeld (1948/2004)– two heavyweights of sociology as well as of communication studies – argued that the arena in which social power is exercised has shifted in post-war America from the realm of the economy to the realm of psychology. At least in part, this has been the result of the power of psychological propaganda developed by the mass media, they argued. The "structure of social control" has changed in American society, argued Merton and Lazarsfeld, suggesting that "economic power seems to have reduced direct exploitation and turned to

a subtler type of psychological exploitation, achieved largely by disseminating propaganda through the mass media of communication" (p. 231)

This passage reflects the Columbia sociology department's amalgamation of a Marxist economic with a liberal psychological perspective on the analysis of social relations. In other words, the authors adapt Marxism's lens of exploitation as an economic process into a view of exploitation as a psychological process that operates on the liberal individual subject. With this shift, the Columbia school thus reframes the analytical focus from materialist Marxist economics to individual psychology and the realm of human relations and communication: Communication between humans – and for the Columbia school, mass media communication – is the new arena in which society plays out its power struggles. It's not merely what happens on the factory floor that shapes the routines of daily life, or sets the tone of political agon, but rather the flows of communication – especially massively organized and disseminated communication. Mass media are a weapon of exploitation because they "narcotize" (p. 235) the public through the manipulation of the psychology of the individual subject, the authors note. Acting like a precursor of later claims about the role of information in society, Merton and Lazarsfeld identified in the functions of psychology, of cognition and emotion, a new form of social power that was replacing the classic approach to power as a materially based structure. "Knowledge of these [psychological] functions is power," they argued; knowledge, that is, of how the individual mind operates and how it can be persuaded on a massive scale.

This intellectual climate influenced both Bell and Gouldner. Bell studied at Columbia for about a year-and-half as a graduate student during the late thirties, and he later became a full professor there. Gouldner was Merton's advisee in the late forties

(Chriss, 2001). Following Merton's lead, Gouldner developed a sociology that called for the deconstruction of Parson's rigid structuralism that was dominant at the time. In the place of the dictates of structure, Gouldner introduced a sociology with liberal ingredients – a sociology that intended to embrace the ideas of greater "freedom and openness" (Chriss, 1999, p. 82) by social actors. Gouldner was a sociologist, in other words, who wanted to discover how social structures affect, and place a burden on, individual psychology.

To put it a little differently, while Gouldner embraced the classic Marxist focus on social class, he warned against Marxism's tendency to "neglect the categories of subjectivity, the individual, and the psyche," as Sewart (1981, p. 445) notes. He also argued that an "adequate critical sociology must indicate how ideas are not derivative expressions of material conditions but are mediated through the individual's socialization experience" (p. 445). Gouldner's emphasis on individual psychology allowed him to build, in turn, a new theoretical model that was focused on the idea of "reflexive sociology" (1970), and which presumed that sociological analysis should be theoretically "polycentric" (Chriss, 1999, p. 5), or in other words, attentive to the pluralism of the emotional world that affects sociological observation. A reflexive sociology, Gouldner (1970) advocated in one of his most famous works, proposes that "awareness of the *self*" is an "indispensable avenue to awareness of the social world" (p. 493).

Like Merton and Lazarsfeld before him, and like Daniel Bell, this approach allowed Gouldner to transition his sociological focus from the analysis of bureaucratic structures to the study of society as a space that is affected, and in part directed by, the psychology of its subjects. Gouldner helped shift sociological analysis, thus, from the

macro-level of Marxism and Weberianism to the micro level of individual psychology; his work helped mold a new theory of bureaucratic organizations as processes of "human relations management" (p. 444), as Sewart (1981) put it. And as historian Martin Jay (1982) observed, Gouldner in this sense "spoke Marxist," but it "was clearly in the accents of his native land" (p. 760) – pluralist liberal America.

These shifts, which were centered in Columbia, affected not only Gouldner but also Daniel Bell. Bell's early work ran parallel to work Columbia's Lazarsfeld and Merton, as well as Gouldner, especially because it was entangled in the dialectic tension between the concept of liberal subjectivism and bureaucratic structuration; between a liberal "ethic of self-determination" and an "immanent authoritarian tendency of bureaucracy that removed the locus of decision far from the field of ordinary social activity" (p. 196), as Brick notes. Even from as early as the late forties and onwards, Bell was keen to find ways that would allow his theory to "extricate individual being from the social organism" (Brick, p. 124). Bell, in other words, wanted to weld liberalism with Marxism rather than abandon the one in favor of the other. As his writings to Dwight Macdonald show, this was one of his central intellectual concerns:

> There is a true distinction between society and the individual. […] Most of our thinking, Marxist, and Deweyan is completely colored by an Hegelian conception of organic identity, a concept shared with the Catholic Church. To an Hegelian the proposition I am I is meaningless. There are no unique Is (sic). I am a doctor, I am a teacher, I am a worker is meaningful in Hegelian terms because the individual is identified in terms of the social role he plays.

> I would add a belief in theory of natural rights, or personality rights if you will, so that no organic conception of society is permissible. I do not draw my rights from the social group and they cannot be taken away from me by the group. In this sense I would affirm Locke against Rousseau and Hegel. (as cited in Brick, 1986, p. 124)

This is not an indication that Bell was a relentless libertarian individualist. Rather, he appears weary of a Hegelianism that aimed to define the individual through his or her relation to a social group, and in the absence of any sense of individual differentiation. Bell was more of the belief that while sociology should pay attention to the role of larger social institutional structures, it should also take into account the role of the individual person within those structures.

While different in many of their sociological approaches, both Bell and Gouldner worked towards the development of a similar theory of a rising information-based society that blends liberal and Marxist aspects. To do so, this meant that they would have to disentangle the concept of the individual from the concept of class. Like their precursors at CCNY and Columbia, they would need to adapt the rigid macro-theories of Marxism with softer liberal theories that focused on individual subjectivity. In this sense, both Bell and Gouldner would end up suggesting something completely contrary to orthodox Marxist thought: That social structure – and class membership – cannot holistically determine consciousness. Rather, consciousness can and should also be understood, they would argue, on the level of individual psychology.

To fully develop their postindustrial theses, Bell and Gouldner would first need to make the individual – and his or her inner state, his or her psychology and experience –

visible to the sociologist. Seen from this point of view, and as I further discuss below, it seems reasonable that both Gouldner and Bel would see in the postindustrial society the rise of a new elite core of knowledge workers who are individualized, who do not completely identify with their class, and who have developed ways to wield social power not as a form of economic control and material possession, but as a form of communication and discourse associated with subjective characteristics such as personal charisma. These new elites attain their social position because they manage, communicate, and project a certain personal image that is correlated primarily with broader markers of cultural status rather than material possession.

Postindustrial Society Literature

Riesman, Touraine, and Gouldner

The idea of the rise of a postindustrial society was not Bell's to begin with. Rather, it was already discussed under different terminologies by various scholars from the fifties and onwards. The first book-length treatment of the postindustrial society was *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*, which was penned in 1950 by David Riesman, with the assistance of Nathan Glazer (who was also a part of the New York Intellectuals) and Reuel Denney.

The affluence of American society after the war signaled, Riesman et al. claim, the gradual rise of a new kind of personality and society. It signaled the passage from a society of "scarcity" and the "inner-directed" personality – a personality that relates to others primarily through the "gyroscope" (p. 16) of introspection – to a new society of material affluence characterized by the "other-directed" (p. 25) personality. The new kind

of personality is oriented not towards the self but towards others – it is a personality defined by the "tendency to be sensitized to the expectations and preferences of others" (p. 9). As Levitt (1956) put it, the key conceptual difference is that on the one hand the "inner-directed man of the past was disciplined by the gyroscope of his internalized goals," while on the other hand "the other-directed man is disciplined by what he picks up on the radar mechanism he keeps constantly beamed on his peers" (p. 102).

Riesman et al. (1950) perform, therefore, a crucial shift in the foundations of sociological analysis, and make an argument about the role of a certain kind of individual psychology – that of the other oriented personality – as the new center of the postindustrial society. Like their predecessors at Columbia, they connect the realm of individual psychology with the realm of macro-social organization. They suggest that individual psychology, and by extension also the subjective relationships between individuals, become the key characteristics of the rising postwar society of affluence. They argue in other words that the in the new society the "scarcity psychology of many inner-directed people, […] needs to give way to an 'abundance psychology' capable of 'wasteful luxury' consumption of leisure and of the surplus product." That is, they note, "unless people want to destroy the surplus product in war, …they must learn to enjoy and engage in those services that are expensive in terms of man power but not of capital – poetry and philosophy, for instance" (p. 18).

This image of a rising society of material affluence, and of highly educated and other-oriented citizens, made it easier for other leftist theorists to embrace the image of a postindustrial society as a space where capitalism's alienation is overcome but where capitalism as a whole is not. For example, Alain Touraine, a theorist whose ideological

commitments were clearly on the Marxist side, developed a theory of postindustrial society that is situated along such lines. Similarly to his American counterparts, Touraine viewed in the rise of the postindustrial society the "eclipse of economics as a system of thought or motive principle of society" (Brick, 1992, p. 358). This is an image of a society in which alienation is replaced by genuine human relationships, and this meant in turn that scholars like Touraine would be able to "find in postindustrial theory a version of their older socialist aspirations," as Brick (1992) notes; it meant that they would identify in the "postindustrial order," the rise of a " 'service society' in which relationships of 'people to people' supplanted relationships of 'people to things,'" and would thus be able to "retain" their "hopes of achieving a society beyond reification, where the satisfaction of social needs supplanted the economic calculus and impersonal service replaced the impersonality of 'efficiency' " (p. 363).

Like Bell's and Gouldner's views of the postindustrial society, Touraine's theoretical approach also transforms Marxism's bipolar view of class into a fluid and pluralistic concept that is founded on the interaction between individualism and social structure. To do so, Touraine develops a theory of society that is made up of "social movements" rather than classes and is constructed by individuals who have political agency vis à vis social structures; those individuals are "social actors" who freely decide to join a collective social movement that aims to improve the common good [7].

Touraine's concept of the social movement maintains a Marxist focus on the collective, but also allows for greater individual flexibility within it – the social movement is made up of people who may or may not be part of the same class, but who

[7] The concept of the social movement is thoroughly analyzed in the chapter on Manuel Castells.

share at least some key political interests and dispositions. While Touraine believed that society was still defined by the intense conflict between the haves and the have-nots, his theory replaces the Marxist idea of a clash between capital and labor in favor of a view of social conflict as emerging from a plurality of individual opinions that are in turn organized within a plurality of social movements. Labor, it is worth noting here, is only one part of Touraine's broader canvas of social movements. Touraine thus saw the postindustrial society as a new and rising mode of social organization that "contained inherently conflictual social relations, which he conceptualized simultaneously in class terms and in terms of social movements," as Kivisto (1984, p. 34) observes.

In this sense, Touraine's work blends Marxist materialism with liberal individualism in ways similar to the theories of Bell and Gouldner. As Scott (1991) argues, Touraine created a kind of Marxist-based "culturalist sociology" (p. 93) that is founded on the idea that the postindustrial society unleashes "new social movements" that are "less concerned with power than with creating alternative lifestyles and with defending civil society from the state and technocracy" (p. 35). Touraine placed these new social movements in "civil society rather than the state, and identified their aims with lifestyle and quality of life issues rather than political and economic issues of distributive justice and rights" (Scott, 1991, p. 35). In other words, Touraine's analysis shifts towards notions of socially responsible types of individualism – or to put it in Riesman's terms, towards an individualism that is other-directed.

Touraine's closest American counterpart is Gouldner, since Gouldner was also a post-Marxist. In a slim but well written book titled *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of a New Class* Gouldner (1979) argues that the postindustrial society is defined by

the rise of a "New Class" of knowledge-based workers who diluted, in turn, the classic Marxist tensions between labor and capital owners.

The New Class increasingly possesses a structurally significant position in the rising forms of society and this, Gouldner suggests, is a result of the historical progress of capitalism; it is the result of the "unrelenting competition" within the "old class" of capital owners who, in their need to "rationalize their productive and administrative efforts and increasingly to heighten efficiency," had to increasingly rely "on the efforts of the New Class intelligentsia and its expert skills" (p. 18). The continuous push towards capitalist efficiency, in other words, meant that industrial capital needed to be managed by those who have the relevant technical expertise, and thus, it became "inherent in the structural situation" that "the old class must bring the New Class into existence" (p. 18), Gouldner contends. Similarly to Bell's knowledge-workers, the New Class achieves for Gouldner autonomy not merely by the acquisition of economic goods (as the elite classes did in the industrial era) but by wielding its cultural capital. Attained through higher education and specialized skills, this New Class "transforms culture into *property*," managing to separate from general labor by using culture as a resource for income "while denying the incomes to those lacking it" (p. 25). In this sense, the New Class attains its power from the development, maintenance, and circulation of culture – it manages to wield economic and political gains from the manipulation of socialized knowledge and from its capacity to communicate that power towards others.

The pinnacle of cultural expression, and its main source of social power, is the New Class' development of a "Culture of Critical Discourse" (p. 64), Gouldner suggests. In the spirit of projecting cultural attributes as a form of power, the New Class employs

rational-based discussion in order to solidify its social position and to legitimate its power. The "central *mode* of influence used by and characteristic of the New Class," writes Gouldner, "is *communication* – writing and talking" (p. 64). The New Class' focus on rational argumentation allows the New Class to achieve labor's buy-in in its decisions within bureaucratic organizations. That is, these elites do not issue directives to labor that are to be followed mindlessly, but rather aim to convince them through reason, discussion, and communication. "Unlike the old class," the New Class does not "*buy* conformity with their interests but seek to *persuade* it," argues Gouldner. The New Class "gets what it wants, then, primarily by rhetoric, by persuasion and argument through publishing and speaking" (p. 64).

By conceptualizing rational argumentation as the center of social power, Gouldner follows suit with other postindustrial scholars who view human relations – or in other words the psychology of the individual as it relates to others – as the foundational element of the rising forms of society. This shift to human relations as a structural component constitutes in turn, as I argue here, a compromise between Marxism's focus on the collective and liberalism's focus on the individual.

Bell's Postindustrial Society and the Restricted View of Theoretical Knowledge

Daniel Bell built off of the work of early scholars in the tradition of postindustrial theory. Bell knew of Riesman's work from his friend Nathan Glazer (a coauthor of Riesman's), and also from his brief stint as a professor in the late forties at the University of Chicago's sociology department (where Riesman also taught). Bell's passage from Chicago was influential also for Bell's adoption of a methodological approach that later on become less popular in American sociology, and which espoused "theorizing long

term societal transformations and the problems they pose for social organization, that is, of doing substantive, general theory that lies between the sterilities of grand theory and empiricism" (Waters, 1996, p. 22). Clearly, the macro-sociological tone that Bell adopts in his postindustrial society book fits well with the scholarship at Chicago.

In his magnum opus, Bell (1973) also makes references, builds on, and adapts, the work of other scholars in the broader tradition of macro-sociological thinking such as Galbraith (1958), Burnham (1941), and others. In particular, he makes sure to single out his differences with Touraine and other "European Neo Marxist theoreticians," who have "emphasized the decisive role of science and technology in transforming the industrial structure and thus called into question the 'ordained' role of the working class as the historic agent of change in society" (p. 39). These writers, argued Bell, "sense the urgency of the structural changes in society" but they become "tediously theological about the 'old' and 'new' working class, for their aim is not to illuminate actual social changes but to 'save' the Marxist concept of social change" (pp. 39-40).

Bell first considered the idea of the postindustrial society with the "publication of proceedings from a 1962-1963 Columbia seminar on technology and social change" (p. 470). Then, in 1973 he published his book the *Coming of Post-industrial Society*, which laid out an image of the rise of a new form of society that is different primarily because of two major social shifts. The first is the shift of the economic sector from "manufacturing" to "services," which implies that the "first and simplest characteristic of the postindustrial society is that the majority of the labor force is no longer engaged in agriculture or manufacturing but in services, which are defined, residually, as trade, finance, transport, health, recreation, research, education, and government" (p. 15). The

second central characteristic of the postindustrial society, Bell argued, is "the primacy of theoretical knowledge." The difference of the knowledge produced in the postindustrial era, he noted, is "the character of knowledge itself" (p. 20,).

As I discuss below, Bell considered theoretical knowledge in two ways. One approach has to do with the restricted meaning of knowledge understood as the capacity to reorganize economic production for the benefit of efficient social planning – for the "social control of change," and for the anticipation of the "future in order to plan ahead" (p. 20), as Bell argued. Under this view, theoretical knowledge appears as a form of informational capital that is produced by universities, by research and development arms of corporations and governments. Theoretical knowledge under this interpretation represents the "primacy of theory over empiricism and the codification of knowledge into abstract systems of symbols that, as in any axiomatic system, can be used to illuminate many different and varied areas of experience" (p. 20). Such an approach resembles more or less a Kantian view that defines knowledge as the abstract capacity to perceive things and facts, and as the ability to reorganize empirical reality according to the categories of the mind.

The organization of society in the postindustrial society follows exactly this kind of structure – from categories in the mind to empirical organization – and thus reverses the industrial reliance on empiricism, as Bell argued. Bell gives a good example that captures his view of the primacy of theory over empirical knowledge. He explained how it was Keynes' theoretical assumptions about the importance of the "intervention of government in the economy" (p. 23), rather than prior empirical experience, that eventually provided the way out of the economic depression in the thirties. In other

words, for Bell the postindustrial society is a space in which the future of society can be modelled and predicted, and therefore acted upon, without the necessary existence of prior empirical experience.

At the center of this image of theoretical processes is the computer, which has the capacity to intake scientific "algorithms" and, with its ability for fast calculation, help expand the horizons of theoretical knowledge. Computers allow for the development and amplification of the social planning that theoretical knowledge demands, as they "have provided the bridge between the body of formal theory and the large data vases if recent years" (p. 24), noted Bell. To make his case clearer, Bell drew upon the work of cybernetician Norbert Wiener to explain how theoretical knowledge can reduce uncertainty in future planning. If the "atom bomb proved the power of pure physics, the combination of the computer and cybernetics has opened the way to a new 'social physics'—a set of techniques, through control and communications theory, to construct a *tableau entière* for the arrangement of decisions and choices" (p. 347), he observed.

In this sense, we see in Bell a reading of the role of theoretical knowledge, and of the postindustrial society more broadly, as a technocratic force – a society in which computers provide the central command from which the rest of social organization can be engineered. Computers and theoretical knowledge go hand in hand, representing a new form of "intellectual technology" that aims to:

> realize a social alchemist's dream: the dream of ordering the 'mass' society. In this society, today, millions of persons daily make billions of decisions about what to buy, how many children to have, whom to vote for, what job to take and the like. Any single choice may be as unpredictable as the quantum atom

> responding erratically to the measuring instrument, yet the aggregate patterns could be charted neatly as the geometer triangulates the height and the horizon. If the computer is the tool, the decision theory is the master. (p. 33)

Reading such attestations about the role of computers, and of mathematical decision theory, has led many scholars to assume that the postindustrial society is a deeply technocratic society that is steered into a stale yet peaceful status quo by an elite class of scientists and engineers and their intelligent computers. In part this is a fair criticism of the postindustrial picture that Bell paints. The power of the technical intelligentsia to manage the economic and social processes in the postindustrial society turns public input – the key element of democracy – into a less important element for the steering of the social ship. But there is another reading of Bell's work, which views communication and community, rather than technocracy, as the steering center of the rising postindustrial society. This is what I analyze in the following pages.

PART II

Bell's Postindustrial Democracy: Theoretical Knowledge as Ideal Community

The centrality of theoretical knowledge in the postindustrial society reflects more than a capacity to reorganize information. When Bell suggests that theoretical knowledge is at the center of the postindustrial society, he also takes that as a shorthand for a model of political relations that mirrors the ideal academic community. Across the book, Bell uses different metaphors to explain how academic relations become the model for the politics of the new society – metaphors such as the shift from the industrial society's economizing mode (p. 274) to the postindustrial society's sociologizing mode (p. 282), the transition from society as a game against fabricated nature to a game between persons (pp. 30-31), or the shift from the industrial model of the entrepreneur (p. 276) to the postindustrial model of the scientist and the scientific community (p. 378).

All these metaphors, as I show below, showcase Bell's nuanced understanding of postindustrial political relations as something that goes beyond technocracy. They point to an image of a rising political society as a space where liberal individualism reigns supreme, but also as a space where individuals, supported by the presence of social institutions, are oriented towards each other and towards the improvement of the common good.

In terms of democratic theory, I suggest that these metaphors introduce something relevant but yet unseen by most scholars who study Bell as well as theories of the postindustrial society more generally. They introduce an image of the postindustrial society as a political space that adapts Marxist principles for a liberal American society. These metaphors indicate Bell's view of the postindustrial society as place where

liberalism's individualistic tendencies can be directed towards the common good. The orienting organization, Bell shows us, is the ideal academic community. The model of the academic community allows for the amalgamation of private interest (the scientist as a free individual who seeks scientific "truth") with an orientation towards the common good (exemplified by the presence of the dialogue-based academic community and by its many institutional layers). "Today's science is both *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*" (pp. 383-384), Bell argues, a community "bound by intimate ties regulating itself through the force of tradition and opinion" and simultaneously an "impersonal society of secondary associations regulated by bureaucratic rules" (p. 383).

Bell's political approach, in other words, embraces a view that blends liberalism's focus on individual agency with a Marxist (and republican) focus on the common good; it also welds the presence of social institutions such as the state or socially-responsible corporations with liberal notions of individual freedom. The dialectic tension between collective structure and individual agency, thus, is not incommensurable for Bell. Rather, Bell finds in this tension an ideal compromise between two extreme edges – a compromise that has been evident in much of his prior work, as well as in the work of others within the theories of the postindustrial society. To put it differently, and as I discuss below, in many ways Bell's model relates to another model that also borrows from liberalism and republicanism – Habermas' (1996) model of communicative democracy.

Amidst the many and complicated models and traditions of democracy, which I discuss in chapter 1, stands the postindustrial theory of Daniel Bell – a theory that presents an image of a society situated in the middle ground between Marxism (and

republicanism) and liberalism. Bell's model, as I present it here, amounts to a complex structure at the center of which stands the ideal of the socially responsible individual. Such an individual maintains private agency but is also sensitive to the interest of others, and to the public interest at large. Bell presumes that the ideal democratic citizen is like the ideal academic researcher – a person who maintains an adherence to freedom of thought and the pursuit of scientific truth, but who is also oriented towards others and whose behavior is regulated by the necessities of the good of the academic community.

As I show below, Bell's view blends liberal and Marxist elements by situating them into the middle ground of that views free individuals as willing to develop bonds of cooperation with each other. Society is not a realm of freewheeling self-interested individuals, but rather, to put it in Riesman's terms, society consists of other-directed free individuals. Bell's metaphors of the postindustrial society as a communal society, as a game between persons, and as a society that has moved away from an economizing to a sociologizing mode all point to this view, as I argue below.

In Bell's theory, the responsible individual is surrounded by a scaffolding of institutions – government, socially-responsible corporations, and so on. These institutions provide the greater setting within which the individual operates, allowing and promoting greater cooperation between individuals. In the example of the academic community, these are institutions such as the university, which draw their legitimacy from the community and which ensure that the commonly accepted rules of scientific inquiry are followed by its individual members. Bell considers that the various layers that surround the individual scientist resemble the political format of a "Greek *polis*" (p. 380) that

welds between the ideals of the Hobbesian liberal individual with Rousseauian views of society as a collective.

In the pages below I explain Bell's mobilization of particular metaphors to paint a picture of the rising political relations of the postindustrial society – relations that are modelled upon the scientific community and which amalgamate between liberal individualism and Marxist (and republican) collectivism. I develop the narrative below in a historical fashion, following Bell's description of a passage from the industrial to the postindustrial society, aiming to uncover through a close analysis of this contrast Bell's subtle yet clear indications of what the postindustrial society's democracy might actually look like.

Private Interest and the Entrepreneur as Symbols of the Industrial Society

Bell discerns between the industrial and postindustrial society by pointing to the "ideal-type" or general "design" of each society that helps in turn "illuminate essential differences" (p. 134) between the two. On the one hand, the industrial society is for Bell designed as a " 'game against fabricated nature,' which is centered on man-machine relationships and uses energy to transform the natural environment into a technical environment" (p. 134). In this society, Bell notes, "the locus of social relations has been the enterprise or firm and the major social problem that of industrial conflict between employer and worker" (p. 134). Social experience is defined by the pre-eminence of factory work, and on its meticulous scientific reorganization that aims to achieve the "best allocation of scarce resources among competing ends" (p. 275), or as is more commonly known, as the quest to "produce more with less" (p. 274). Life in the industrial

society is, at least for those in the massive labor class, decided by the routines of heavy machinery and the continuous chase for greater productivity in other words.

The symbolic center of this society – the ideal individual – is the entrepreneur. Drawing his examples in part from Joseph Schumpeter (1976) (a theorist in the administrative tradition of democracy), Bell suggests that the industrial society's quest for efficiency was founded by the entrepreneur's "thrift and savings" that were reinvested in the economy, as well as spurred by his mentality of being a "man who unsettled things, who got things done" (p. 77).

The entrepreneur symbolizes the liberal foundations of the industrial society, since it is "private entrepreneurship" (p. 61), "private capitalists" (p. 71) and "private property" (p. 72) that made up of the primarily economizing structures of the industrial society. The result of such a private-economy-first structuration of society meant that the public interest was subordinated to the imperatives of individual economic competition. The strength of ties within the members of the community was weak in industrial societies, and existed in the shadow of the principle of the individual quest for profit and was undermined by society's quest for economically efficient productivity. In this kind of economic-first structure, the political decision-making – the polis – remained secondary. As Bell notes, referring particularly to American industrial society, social life remained subordinate to economic rationality; this society was organized according to an economic "rationality of *means*, a way of best satisfying a given *end*" (p. 275).

In other words, the political ends of the industrial society were not decided or negotiated by anyone; rather, they were given, predefined by the necessities of economic productivity. As Bell notes, the economizing mode of social organization entailed a

society in which individuals were weakly connected and competitive to each other. Furthermore, in the economizing mode, he notes, the primary function of allocating social goods was the market: "The conditions of economizing," writes Bell, were a "market mechanism as the arbiter of allocation, and a fluid price system which is responsive to the shifting patterns of supply and demand" (p. 269).

To put it a little differently, industrial society was organized as a liberal democracy built around the primacy of self-interest in the marketplace. And as Bell argues, without directly referring to liberal democratic theory, one of the main problems of the industrial society was its individualist focus: The social structure of a "plurality of ends" (p. 275) that industrial societies propagated, he notes, meant that the American public "never felt the need to define its ends or to establish priorities within some set of ends. It always eschewed such collective decision making" (p. 275). In Bell's progressive historical narrative, that is, the industrial structuration of society encountered the problem that classic liberal models of democracy face overall – the problem of collective coordination. Such societies were overtaken by the rise of an "atomistic" approach, he observes, that reflects the "utilitarian fallacy that the sum of individual decisions is equivalent to a social decision" (p. 283). Referring to the primacy of economizing as an organizing force, Bell laments that in the industrial society "no one 'voted' for these decisions in some collective fashion," and that "no one assessed (or could assess) the consequences of these changes. Yet a whole new way of life, based on the utilitarian calculus or the economizing mode, gradually began to transform the whole society" (p. 276).

The industrial society, with its focus on economizing, was unable to incorporate the value added by social goods – that is, intangible, experiential, and informational goods. These intangible goods are for example "clean air, pure water, sunshine," Bell notes, "to say nothing of imponderables such as ease of meeting friends, satisfaction in work, etc." (p. 279). With their focus on atomism, industrial societies propagated deficiencies of intangible immaterial values – especially the values of human connection and communication, a sense of happiness as it relates to others, and so on. In the same vein, Bell notes, industrial societies could not deal with the economic externalities that are associated with an atomistic approach to social life – they had an inability to bear and manage, he observes, the "costs" that arise "from private operation onto the society as a whole" (p. 284). In this sense, Bell continues, when industrial "American society emphasized, as the primary consideration, the satisfaction of individual private consumption, the result was an imbalance between public goods and private goods." Using the example of taxes, Bell indicates the starkly negative connotations of private action and self-interest – or to put it in this dissertation's terms, of the liberal democratic approach – noting that "in the popular psychology" of industrial societies "taxes were not considered as the necessary purchase of public services that an individual cannot purchase for himself, but as money 'taken away from *me* by *them*' " (p. 280). An example of giving back to the community, taxes, was in the industrial society something to be ideally avoided as it did not directly benefit one's private interest.

Postindustrial Society: Politics Over the Economy

The postindustrial society, on the other hand, is not defined by such a distinction between me and them. Rather, this new kind of society is marked by a transition away from the problems of industrial individualism – from the problems of coordinating public and private interest – by becoming what Bell describes as a communal society; a society that stands in the dialectical middle between the imperatives of the public good and the individual freedom to pursue private interest.

If the industrial society was defined as a game against fabricated nature (p. 134) in which private interest reigns supreme, then the postindustrial society's design is that of a game between **persons (p),** Bell argues, in which "each person's course of action is necessarily shaped by the reciprocal judgments of the others' intentions" (p. 41). Each person's actions are shaped, in other words, by their orientation towards others and towards the common good. Such a cooperation between different social actors represents the passage from the industrial era's liberal individualism, to the relational spirit of the postindustrial society. In the communal postindustrial society, as Bell notes, the "social unit is community rather than the individual, and one has to achieve a 'social decision' as against, simply, the sum total of individual decisions, which when aggregated end up as nightmares" (p. 128).

The postindustrial society therefore moves away from liberal approaches to democracy but does not solely embrace, on the other hand, Marxism; rather it stands somewhere in between. For Bell, as I discuss below, liberal and collective tendencies are welded into one through the presence of two interrelated kinds of social coordination: a cooperation between individual persons, and a cooperation between private and public

institutions, both of which provide the necessary scaffolding for the ideal governing of the postindustrial society.

The ideal citizen who stands at the center of the postindustrial society is not the privately-interested entrepreneur, but the scientist or academic: a highly educated individual who embraces, but who can also transcend, private interest; a person who has internalized a responsible commitment towards the good of the community. The scientist is the ideal citizen of Bell's democracy because she is both individualistic in her autonomous pursuit of truth, but also open and willing to cooperate with others in the scientific community and, additionally, also bound by the regulatory framework provided by a set of cooperative public and private institutions.

As Bell observes, academics are both internally committed to the pursuit of scientific truth but they achieve this not merely through an individualistic and entrepreneurial style of thinking, but rather by accepting the support, and themselves in turn supporting, the broader academic community. Academics think freely as individuals, but they also engage in a cooperation with others; an academic community is like a "self-regulating commune," Bell observes, "of free men and women united by a common quest for truth" (pp. 379-80).

An ideal academic community is thus a blend of personal as well as communal responsibility to the scientific truth, with the one being indispensable to the other and vice versa – neither purely individualistic nor purely communitarian. Together, academics create rules and procedures for the proper pursuit of scientific truth, which are then encoded within the institutions that house them. The academic community resembles thus an ancient Greek polis (p. 380), as Bell suggests, because its members are both free

individuals but are also bound by their adherence to commonly agreed upon processes, and this, in turn, allows the community to develop a relational structure in the image of the ideal democracy of ancient Greece. The academic community, Bell notes:

> Has no postulated formal belief, but it has an ethos which implicitly prescribes rules of conduct. It is not a political movement that one joins by subscription, for membership is by election, yet one must make a commitment in order to belong. It is not a church where the element of faith rests on belief and is rooted in mystery, yet faith, passion, and mystery are present, but they are directed by the search for certified knowledge whose function it is to test and discard old beliefs. Like almost every human institution, it has its hierarchies and prestige rankings, but this ordering is based uniquely on achievement and confirmation by peers rather than on inheritance, age grading, brute force, or contrived manipulation. In totality, it is a social contract but in a way never foretold by Hobbes or Rousseau, for while there is voluntary submission to a community and moral unity results, the sovereignty is not coercive and the conscience remains individual and protestant. As an imago it comes closest to the ideal of the Greek *polis*, a republic of free men and women united by a common quest for truth. (p. 380)

The academic community resembles a Greek polis that welds the two edges of the liberal-republican spectrum – the tensions between Hobbes's individualistic approach and Rousseau's collectivism. Such a clash between the ideal of individual freedom and the ideal of the collective good is not, however, resolved through an uncritical adoption of a political "ideology" (p. 406), as Bell notes. These two edges do not come closer through

the development of an overriding collective purpose that undermines the will of individuals. Nor is such tension, however, resolved by absolute individualization – what Haraway (2000) has described in a different conversation as a form of "abstract individuation, an ultimate self untied at last from all dependency, a man in space" (p. 292). Rather, the tension is resolved through the amalgamation of both tendencies. The glue that holds the two edges together – individual interest and a commitment to the common good – is the internalization of a common ethos, and an adherence to particular scientific processes, rules, and norms, which are collectively agreed upon and are reinforced by the presence of academic institutions.

For members of the academic community, norms are derived from the rational pursuit of theoretical knowledge, a pursuit that starts with individual free thought, but which is also open to informal debate-based critique by the rest of the academic community. For Bell, the academic community is constructed at its core as a form of "fellowship," its members sharing a "self-conscious feeling of belonging to a special order" – it is a network of "relationships that are intimate and personal [but also] cooperative and competitive" (p. 294). The pursuit of knowledge, notes Bell, is fundamentally based on human relationships. It cannot be realized through the theories or approaches akin to a "mechanical algorithm which runs down every possible permutation and combination." Rather, knowledge is "but an insight which is subject to verification" and which "must run the gauntlet of criticism" (pp. 381-382).

This criticism is not restricted in the interchange of informal critique between fellow academics. It also needs to receive the approval of academic institutions. The academic community is, in other words, not only formed through the informal processes

of cooperation between individuals but is also regulated and supported by its own institutions. For an idea to be accepted as knowledge in the academic community, Bell argues, it first needs to emerge out of the "norm of free inquiry" (p. 382); but it also needs to pass the test of institutional authority – it needs to pass the criticism of scholars who are part of the broader "scientific estate" (p. 382) and who may be as anonymous as those "initial 'referees' whose judgment permits publication in the scientific journals" as well as those distant yet well-known "seniors whose word commands respect" (p. 382).

In fact, Bell offers a clear description of the internal structures of academia – structures that operate, as I argue in this chapter, as models for Bell's ideal postindustrial society overall. As Bell suggests, there are three core types of levels and associated memberships within the proper academic community. The first level is the "scientific establishment," which is composed in "overlapping layers," by the "outstanding figures in major universities, the heads and leading figures of the major government-sponsored laboratories […], the editors of the general science journals" (p. 390), and so on. Figures and institutions like those constitute the "political elite," of the academic community, "which is not necessarily unified and which often plays the mediating role between government and science" (p. 390). On a second level, then, stands the "occupational society which is made up of the more than 1,800 professional associations, such as the American Physical Society, the American Chemical Society." These societies play the role of "trade associations" and also have a right to negotiate more broadly on behalf of academics with the government or with corporations. Finally, on a third level, there is a "small number [of] individuals whose moral authority is drawn from their standing in the 'charismatic community; and whose stature rests on their intellectual contributions –

Einstein, Bohr, Fermi, von Neumann." These personalities constitute the "spokesmen for science" (p. 391), Bell notes.

Taken together, these organizations, occupational societies, and significant individuals comprise the multiple institutional layers of the academic community. They represent a hierarchical but accessible institutional scaffolding, at the center of which stands the socially responsible self-governing academic. The Greek polis of the academic community is, thus, founded on the one hand on the individual responsibility of academics to follow the norms of scientific discovery – an adherence that may be contrary to narrow self-interest. As Bell suggests, the social responsibility that academics show "doesn't mean that professionals are more charitable and high-minded than their fellows, but their expectations about their conduct derive from an ethic of service which, as a norm, is prior to an ethic of self-interest" (p. 374).

On the other hand, the academic Greek polis is also founded on the co-construction of scientific norms by both socially oriented individuals and professional institutions. The professional institutions that participate in this process exist to safeguard the process and to facilitate the relationships between scientists or scientific groups. There is of course, at the same time, a tension between the informal aspects of the scientific community and its bureaucratic and formal aspects. Increased bureaucratization, Bell notes, runs the danger of "stifling inquiry" (p. 405). Science is "tied to the fate of intellectual freedom, and science must speak out against any efforts to impose an official ideology or a doctrinal view of truth" (p. 406); indeed, what is most important, Bell notes, is realizing that science's "moral foundations compel all men who

believe in science to support the conditions of cooperation and intellectual freedom" (p. 407).

The Knowledge Worker as the Ideal Citizen and the "Cockpit of Politics"

If the scientist is the symbolic citizen of the postindustrial society, its mirror image is the knowledge-worker who takes up her position within the growing, and eventually dominant, services industry of the postindustrial society. Like the scientist who is guided by the individual pursuit of truth, but who also adheres to professional norms, values, and institutional rules, the knowledge worker operates on both an individual and a collective level. The scientist and "more widely the technical intelligentsia" are "not monolithic" nor do they "act as a corporate group" (p. 358) argues Bell. Rather, in their political decisions, knowledge workers may side with conflicting political movements, which may or may not be congruent to existing labor or capitalist interests. In this sense, knowledge workers oscillate between protecting the rights of their own class and following their individual beliefs and political opinions.

Bell's (1973) knowledge workers are, thus, quite similar to Gouldner's (1979) and Touraine's, (1971) who also suggest that the conscience of the New Class is not solely derived from one's location within the social structure. Instead, the knowledge workers' conscience blends the Marxist imperative of social structure with a liberal understanding of politics as the realm of individual psychology. To put it a little differently, the knowledge worker internalizes his/her socio-structural responsibility, turning it into a form of psychological orientation towards others. Or to borrow Riesman et al.'s (1950) terms, the knowledge worker exhibits signs of an other-directed personality. The

knowledge worker exhibits, that is, an emotional and individual-based – rather than class-based – type of social solidarity.

Like Gouldner and Touraine, then, Bell's view of the knowledge worker amounts to a shift towards the politicization of individual psychology. If politics and solidarity become a matter of individual psychological orientation towards others – an emotion and a character trait rather than a result of membership in a class – then the road is open to seeing politics as the outcome of lifestyle choices and personal mood, rather than as a result of obligations imposed on individuals by their position in the social hierarchy.

Of course, Bell's democratic model is still far from a complete psychologization of political life – he does see in the postindustrial society a form of cooperation that is informal and personalized, but he also makes room for a complex set of institutional structures that aim to regulate extreme individual positions and behaviors. In this way, the postindustrial society amalgamates between the wants of the individual psyche and the needs of the collective: "The political ethos of an emerging post-industrial society is 'communal,'…insofar as the criteria of individual utility and profit maximization become subordinated to the broader conceptions of social welfare and community interest" (p. 481), argues Bell. In other words, the political life of the community takes precedence over the pursuit of individual self-interest in the postindustrial society – a society in which "men live more and more outside nature, and less and less with machinery and things; they live with and encounter one another" (p. 488).

In fact, for Bell the political arena includes a variety of groups, not just knowledge workers. In the postindustrial society there is a distinct "desire for participation" (p. 366) by various groups, Bell argues, such as labor, politicians and

bureaucrats that run the state, and even capital owners. In this environment of hierarchical yet "participatory democracy" (p. 366), various intersecting and conflicting interests collide with the increasing practices of "inclusion of disadvantaged groups" (p. 367). The most fundamental issue that the political arena faces is the collective coordination between those disparate interests expressed by individuals and groups. Technical knowledge (a restricted interpretation of theoretical knowledge in other words) is not the solution to the problem of social coordination. The solution rather lies, Bell notes, in the "cockpit of politics" (p. 364): The "technocratic mind-view necessarily falls before politics" (p. 365), he observes, as the "power of the economic order (and the power of the men who run it) is coming to an end, and new and varied, but different, control systems are emerging. In sum the control of society is no longer primarily economic but political" (p. 373).

The dominance of the politics over technocracy means that political participation in the postindustrial society is not only wide but also bears the potential for social conflict – something that may harm the collective coordination of the postindustrial society. The solution to such problems is however political rather than technological for Bell: "Communal instruments - the effort to create social choice out of the discordance of individual personal preferences – necessarily sharpen value conflicts […]. These issues, and thousands more, cannot be settled on the basis of technical criteria; necessarily they involve value and political choices" (p. 364), Bell suggests.

Thus, under this view it is obvious that technology takes the back seat in the political structuration of a society primarily operating as a game between persons. The role of technology in the postindustrial society is to facilitate social coordination and the

avoidance of conflict, not to passively dictate the political goals of society. Technology provides the infrastructure of communication, but it does not predetermine the direction of society. The aim of technology created in the "latter half of the twentieth century" (p. 42), Bell argues, is not so much the improvement of private life, but the amplification of communication between disparate individuals and groups across the nation, helping thus realize the communal nature of the postindustrial society. Technology brings people together so they can decide where their community is going. The "real effect of the 'pace of change' " in the changing "dimensions of knowledge and technology," Bell suggests, has "come not from the various technological items, but from a tightened social framework, which has brought isolated regions and classes of a nation into society and has multiplied the degree of contact and interaction between persons through the revolutions in communication and transportation" (p. 42).

In this sense, the postindustrial society is not primarily a society of technological innovation, but rather a society in which information and communication technologies provide a new basis for the realization of tighter, less disparate, communities across the globe. Technology provides solutions to the problem of scale in the postindustrial society, as it helps combine individual freedom with tightly knit communities that come together through technologically-mediated forms of communication. As Bell observes, alongside the "greater degree of interdependence" in the postindustrial society has also "come a change of scale – the scale of cities, the growth of organizational size, the widening of the political arena" (p. 42). The "major social revolution of the latter half of twentieth century" Bell argues, is the "attempt to master the 'scale' by new technological devices, whether it be 'real time' computer information or new kinds of quantitative

programming" (p. 42). Technologies amplify, thus, the possibility for political coordination between people – they are not the ends but rather the means for the construction of a more communal postindustrial society.

Conclusion: Daniel Bell and Jürgen Habermas

Hidden beneath the technocratic surface of Bell's narrative stands a clear image of a democratic model that translates between the liberal and the Marxist (and republican) traditions. At the center of Bell's democratic model, one will find two core elements: (a) cooperation between individual citizens and (b) a dense institutional scaffolding that facilitates and regulates interpersonal cooperation and which mitigates social conflicts. In other words, Bell's postindustrial democracy places the community, the responsible individual citizen, and their surrounding institutional setting, within a check and balances relationship where one monitors, checks upon, and regulates the other.

As a decision-making process, the postindustrial society relies on the coordination between free individuals inside the community – the institutions that surround them are only secondary to the community. More importantly, such institutions draw their legitimacy from the presence of a community that, like the ideal academic polis, is founded upon the blending of individual freedom and the simultaneous orientation of those individuals to the collective good. Politics for Bell is not the sum of individually-held opinions – as the liberal models of democracy would suggest – but rather represents a blend of liberal values and Marxist (and republican) values.

Such a conjunction of liberal and Marxist ideals – and an adherence to the community as the source of democratic legitimation – is closely related to the democratic

model of Jürgen Habermas (1994; 1996). Granted, Habermas' approach is complex and nuanced, and it differs from Bell's at least in the sense that it presumes the presence of non-hierarchical relations between members of a democratic community. It doesn't accept, in other words, the hierarchical power of charismatic individuals – as Bell's approach does.

But at the same time, both approaches are hybrids that blend two edges – on the one hand liberalism's focus on individualistic private interest, and on the other hand the republican focus on community as constitutive of individuals' political expression. For Habermas, democracy is a community that is founded on the middle ground between state and market, and so is Bell's academic community and postindustrial society more broadly.

Habermas' approach is positioned between the liberal and republican traditions of democracy through the mediating concept of communication. The essence of Habermasian democracy lies exactly in the orientation of individuals towards others in the community – a form of intersubjectivity, as Habermas describes it, which stems from the acceptance of the fundamental and inescapable entanglement in each other's lives, and of the vulnerability that this inevitably produces.

Habermas (1996) directly claims that his model indeed stands in between the " 'liberal' or Lockean view" in which "politics has the function of bundling together and pushing private interests against a government apparatus" and the " 'republican' view" that takes politics as "constitutive for the processes of society as a whole" (p. 1). As he notes, his theory of democracy "takes elements from both sides and integrates them in the concept of an ideal procedure for deliberation and decision making" (p. 296). The liberal

model, in other words, considers democracy to be a process of compromise between the private interests of individuals, while the republican model extends the public good over the private interests of individuals – in its extreme form of Communism, the public good completely overrides any semblance of privately-held interests of individual persons.

For Habermas, it is discourse as a form of human communication that balances the tension between individualism and the common good – it is rational argumentation between self-governing members of the community that operates as the ultimate process of political decision-making. Such communication allows each members of the community to "get clear about the kind of society they want to live in" (p. 3) – to get clear about what their ideal community looks like, to communicate it to others, and to look towards finding cooperative solutions that respect the broader common good. For Habermas, thus, communication between free and empathetic individuals – between citizens who engage in mutual understanding – becomes the key institutional procedure of a proper democratic society.

This model shares many commonalities to Bell's approach that, as I discuss in this chapter, also conceptualizes individual freedom as something that is commensurable to the collective good. Bell's ideal democracy is primarily founded on the capacity of individuals to internalize their responsibility towards others – through their ability to become other-oriented and thus to achieve a sense of understanding, an empathy, towards the social other. Bell imagines a society that is not merely technocratic, as many of his critics have suggested, but rather presents us with a view of society that is modelled after his ideal academic community – a community whose individuals members freely embrace responsibility towards each other, and who enact politics in the form and shape

of the communal game between persons that characterizes the design of the postindustrial society.

CHAPTER 3

Freedom and the Common Good in Castells' Social Movement Democracy

In this chapter, I argue that Castells' (1996; 1997; 1998) *Information Society* trilogy builds on and revises the normative ideals present in Bell's (1973) *Postindustrial Society*In the previous chapter, I showed that Bell blends the liberal ideal of individual freedom with the republican (and Marxist) ideal of the collective good through the constitution of a democratic subject that is attuned to the needs of the community. Despite merging such antithetical ideals, I also noted in that chapter that Bell's methodological focus is, still, the individual: it is the individual who is other-oriented; the individual internalizes democratic responsibilities; indeed the center of the postindustrial society is, as Bell describes it, a game between persons.

In comparison, we could say that Castells' democratic model amounts to a game between collectives. As Castells (1997) notes, the political subject in the information society is not the individual but rather "collective social actors" (p. 10). In this chapter, I show how one such particular collective social actor – the "social movement" – helps elucidate Castells' democratic ideals. I suggest that for Castells social movements represent the ideal rule-by-the-demos in the information society: flexible, grassroots mobilizations that emerge from political actions of free individuals who, through networks of communication, develop over time a collective consciousness that is greater than the sum of its individual parts. In this sense, Castells' social movements parallel Bell's ideal democratic citizen in that they both embrace democratic ideals that weld the liberal principle of individual freedom with the republican value of the common good.

Castells blends liberalism with republicanism by attributing agency to individuals while simultaneously assuming that they are attuned to the greater collective through information flows within the social network. Information flows provide a flexible social structure that connects the movement's members and, without denying their individuality, also allow for the development of a political consciousness that exists on the level of the collective. To borrow Fred Turner's (2009) phrase in a different but relevant analytical context, in this democratic model, flows of information help construct a dense but flexible "cultural infrastructure" (p. 75) that transforms individual opinions into collective political action.

As I discuss in this chapter, the social movement is not the only collective actor in the Castellian universe. In fact, the information society is characterized by conflicts between various collectives that culminate into what Castells argues is the key "bipolar opposition" in the information society between "the Net and the Self" (1996, p. 3). On the one hand the Net represents a conglomeration of institutions of the status quo – networks of interconnected global and regional governments, as well as markets, corporations, and other such established institutions of power. The Self, on the other hand, represents a conglomeration of public responses to the forces of the Net through the formation of different types of collective identities.

In fact, the Self embraces three different types of collective identity that operate as responses to the social structures of the Net. The first two, which Castells describes as the "legitimizing" and "resistant" (p. 9) identities, possess a political consciousness and language that is subordinate and dependent upon the power of the institutions of the Net. These two political identities, as I show in this chapter, do not represent the ideal

democratic identity of the information society. Castells (1997) grants only the third type – the "project" identity or social movement – a true democratic pedigree as the "source of social change in the network society" (p. 70). In this chapter I explicate the ways in which social movements have a democratic character that blends individual freedom with a collective orientation towards the common good. Conceptually speaking, this blending of democratic ideals situates social movements within communicative approaches to democracy, especially close to Iris Marion Young's (2000; 2011) theory.

One of the contributions of this chapter is that it highlights the significance of the social movement – a concept that has otherwise flown under the academic radar in currently existing scholarship on Castells. Most critics (eg.: Ampuja & Koivisto, 2014; Garnham, 2004; Marcuse, 2002) focus on Castells' bleak view of the information society as a bastion of neoliberal policies, and critique his narrative that applauds the decline of the welfare state and labor unions, and which celebrates the growth of global free markets and entrepreneurialism as the new and preferable way of flexible living.

While I do not disagree with Castells' critics, I aim to elucidate the ways in which Castells' develops an exit strategy – a democratic antidote of sorts – to this neoliberal order. For Castells, the door for social change is open to the public through its capacity to form social movements. From this vantage point, we can see how Castells understands the flows of information and knowledge in the postindustrial age not only as a source of elite control, but also as a potential tool of public emancipation – this emancipation, I argue, is painted with the same palette of conceptual colors as I.M. Young's democratic theory.

To figure out what social movements are, how they form, and what their democratic role is within Castells' theory, I turn first to Alain Touraine (1971; 1981) whose work significantly impacted Castells' sociological approach. In fact, Castells (2016) proclaimed that Touraine has been his most significant source of "inspiration" as well as his "original mentor and intellectual father" (p. 15). Their "intellectual interaction since 1964," he noted, was "essentially formative in my thinking and my style of inquiry, always looking, in his terms, to understand the production of society by social actors rather than the reproduction of social structure by institutions" (p. 15).[8]

Still in the first part of the chapter, I provide links between Touraine, Gouldner, and Bell – all of whom belong to the same generation of postindustrial scholarship and who I also discuss in chapter two. My aim is to show how all three scholars embrace the ideal of the other-directed individual as one of the foundations of postindustrial democracy. Then, I analyze in parallel Castells' and Touraine's theory of social movements – a theory that emerged fully in the early eighties with Touraine's (1981) *Voice and the Eye* and Castells' (1983) *City and the Grassroots*. Their work on social movements at the time earned them the privilege of being called founders (Hannigan, 1985) of a new school of thought – of the French School of New Social Movements.

In the last section of the first part of this chapter, I discuss Castells' (1989) last book before his *Information Society* trilogy. My analysis of Castells *Informational City* aims to provide a better understanding of the origins of Castells' neoliberal narrative. In the eighties, Castells moved from France to the bay area to take up a position at The

[8] Diani and Clark's (2013) edited volume on Touraine's work, especially in the chapter by Dubet and Wieviorka (pp. 55-75), suggests that Touraine's study of the postindustrial society was almost equivalent to the study of new social movements.

University of California, Berkeley. His work was undoubtedly impacted[9] by the new empirical reality he witnessed: Silicon Valley's technological success appeared for Castells able to provide a blueprint for a new society in which technology facilitates the information necessary to fill the void left by an ailing social welfare state. We can find fragments of this reasoning baked into the broader narrative that Castells provides in his *Information Age* trilogy.

In Part II of this chapter, I perform a close reading of Castells' *Information Age* with a goal to explain the ways in which social movements represent Castells' ideal democratic model that blends liberalism and republicanism. To do so, I first tend to the broader canvas of power in the information society within which Castells situates social movements. I argue that Castells considers information flows as the center of power in the new society and that therefore any collective that manages to control information – social movements included – also lays a claim on the overall control of society. To show how Castells (1996) understands power as a form of communication, and of communication as a form of information flows, I analyze his concepts of the "space of flows" (p. 376).

Second, and still within the discussion of the broader canvas of power upon which social movements operate, I explain what Castells means by the conflict between the Net and the Self. The Net is a composite of networked institutions of established power that is controlled by a global group of elites. On the other hand, the Self represents the public's

[9] As Castells suggests in various interviews, his move to America helped him develop a lens of analysis that is deeply empirical and attuned to the daily processes of social life (see: Kreissler, 2001; Castells & Ince, 2003). Also, as Felix Stalder (2006) suggests in his book *Manuel Castells*, Castells' work in different locations and from within different cultures around the globe must have influenced – to some degree creatively refracted – into his analytical lens.

response to the forces of the Net, and comes in three different types of collective identity: the legitimizing, the resistant, and the project identity. While I discuss all three, I focus on social movements (or project identity), and show how Castells grafts these movements with the capacity to bring about social change as the result of a democratic process that welds liberal and republican values. I closely analyze a particular example of a social movement that Castells offers – the global feminist movement – indicating in detail how his view embraces democratic ideals that mix the idea of individual freedom with the idea of the collective good.

Placed within the broader literature on Castells, my chapter problematizes also the widely held view that Castells is a staunch neoliberal. At least when it comes to the normative backcloth of his *Information Age* trilogy, I argue, Castells' ideals may very well live somewhere in the middle space between the extremities of neoliberalism and Marxist republicanism; in a democratic balance that closely – and quite unexpectedly – parallels I.M. Young's (2000; 2011) model of democracy as a form of freely expressed and collectively maintained communication within a social network.

As I discuss in the conclusion of this chapter, for both Castells and I.M. Young, democracy emerges from the interstices of communicative interaction outside institutional boundaries; imagined in its normative form, democracy is the communicational process that takes place in the autonomous cultural sphere of a free community of equals. While Young's model focuses more effusively on the concept of inclusion as struggle – and, to be fair, is a more clearly elaborated and philosophically justified model than Castells' – as I argue in this chapter, both scholars imagine

democracy as a process of social change that emerges from grassroots mobilizations of free yet densely connected, and socially aware, collectives.

Part I

Castells' Activist Beginnings and the Concept of the Social Movement

Manuel Castells' interest in social change initially emerged from his personal experiences rather than by a theoretical interest in the matter. Having been born in Spain in 1949, a country under the spell of the Franco dictatorship, Castells decided early on that he "had enough" with a government in which "just expressing yourself would get you into trouble with the political police" (Castells & Ince, 2003, p. 9). In a path that is not that dissimilar to Daniel Bell's early years, Castells decided at the age of 18 to join a leftist revolutionary movement.

And like Bell, Castells too was motivated by the need for social change from a Marxist perspective but was not at all interested with its most extreme formulation – Communism. As Castells notes about his early political involvements: "I saw myself basically as an anarchist, although using Marxist theory. I hated the Communists because they were authoritarian and, in my view at that time, they had betrayed the revolution in the Spanish war" (Castells & Ince, 2003, p. 9). Reflecting on such multifaceted interests as Marxism, anarchism, but not Communism, meant that Castells needed to join a revolutionary leftist group that would be similarly open to such diverse political commitments. Castells did not join any of the leading resistance groups of the time in Spain, but rather a "sui generis, radical group named the Workers Front of Catalonia (FOC in Catalan), naturally with very few workers in its ranks, made up of proponents of

all kinds of ideologies, from Catholics to Marxist-Leninists, Social Democrats, and anarchists" (p. 9).

Yet, before Castells completed his undergraduate degree, at the age of 20, he would escape his country to avoid imprisonment and possible torture by the Franco regime (Castells & Ince, 2003, p. 10). He passed the border into neighboring France and, soon enough, found his way once more into the field of social change but this time from a scholarly perspective. He finished his undergraduate degree in Sorbonne and then began working towards his doctoral degree under the supervision of Alain Touraine, a scholar who many – among them Castells himself – considered to be at the time a "rising star in French sociology" (Castells & Ince, 2004, p. 11). After the completion of his degree, Castells was appointed a position as professor at the University of Paris, Nanterre. The year was 1968, and cultural revolt was brewing in Paris – in fact, the Nanterre campus served as the center of the May '68 movement and, even more interestingly, Daniel Con-Bendit who was the leader of the movement was one of Castells' students. Being once more at the center of intense political change, Castells would have to leave the country that hosted him once again, this time France and for a briefer period, after being exiled by the De Gaulle government for his participation in the student uprisings.

Looking back at such galvanizing personal experiences, Castells (Kreissler, 2001) acknowledged later on that his interest in sociology was motivated by what he saw as a genuine call for social change that he witnessed with his very own eyes: "If I had been in a normal country," he noted, "law would have attracted me very much, and economics also; but I was driven to the necessity for social change, first in Spain and later in France." In this frame of mind, sociology provided for Castells a field that can offer

something beyond an "intellectual" and "professional" excitement – it delivered him, also, "the possibility of contributing some form of social change and betterment of society" (para 9).

Seen under this light, then, it may not be that surprising that one of the central threads in Castells' work is the study of social change – a theme that he mainly approaches in terms of the power dialectic between social actors who aim to conserve the status quo, on the one hand, and those who aim to challenge it on the other hand. This dialectic is, as Castells observes, plays out between "power and counterpower" (Castells, 2016, p. 2) and takes place between those who "exercise power" by "establishing institutions, laws, and communication systems that express their interests and values" and those who resist them because their "interests and values are not sufficiently represented in dominant institutions" (p. 2).

As I argue in this chapter, it is within this broad canvas of power and counterpower, and about the social change that the pendulum of power may bring about, that Castells positions the social movement as the ideal democratic social actor in the postindustrial society – a collective that emerges out of grassroots forces and which aims to change the established institutions of society in ways that embrace the demands of the public at large. Social movements are, however, only one of the potential counterpowers of the postindustrial society, with the others being either conservative legitimizing movements that aim to maintain the status quo, or resistance movements that aim to oppose the status quo without offering any constructive alternatives for the re-imagination of society under new political values.

To get at the construct of the social movement as Castell's understands it, I first analyze Touraine's (1971) flagship work, *The Postindustrial Society*, which helps set the broader context of sociological theory within which Castells operated – sociology that emerged from Marxism and veered close, but never entirely, into liberal theoretical territory. Touraine argued that in the industrial society the working class was the historical agent of social change by aiming to re-appropriate the material means of production. In the postindustrial society, Touraine suggested, the historical agent becomes the social movement, which does not aim to challenge the distribution of material relations but to radically reform society's consciousness – its cultural ways of life [10]. After I discuss the postindustrial society according to Touraine, I point to the similarities between his view and Bell's view as well as Gouldner's. Then, I delve into the analysis of how Castells understands the concept of the social movement.

Social Movements in Alain Touraine's *Postindustrial Society*

Considering information as the center of the new economy is not Touraine's (1971) original contribution, although he is certainly one of the first and most significant scholars in the field of postindustrial theory. Various scholars before Touraine have made similar claims, with some variations in scope and approach of course, with regard to rise of information and its role in shaping the organization of society (eg.: Machlup, 1962). What distinguishes Touraine's view from most other scholars, however, is his deep interest in revealing how the transition from the industrial era of factory-based economies to a postindustrial era of information-based production has also created new types of

[10] For a very lucid explanation of Touraine's social movements and cultural politics, see Wieviorka (2014).

social inequality. In the new age, Touraine (1971) argues, "the principal opposition between classes or groups of classes does not result from the fact that one possesses wealth of property and other does not. It comes about because the dominant classes dispose of knowledge and control *information"* (p. 61).

An information society means that human resources, and their efficient management, lie at the center of value production. The human mind and its capacity to construct new knowledge – rather than the value produced by manual labor – becomes the most prized resource of the new economy. This is what Touraine observes when he argues that the new economy "depends much more directly than ever before on knowledge, and hence on the capacity of society to call forth creativity. All domains of social life – education, consumption, information, etc. – are being more and more integrated into what used to be called production factors" (p. 5), he suggests. In other words, "economic progress" depends for Touraine "not only on the quantity of available labor" but on the immaterial qualities of the mind, such as the "ability to innovate, to accept change, and to utilize every work capability" (p. 62).

The new organization of the economy around information, Touraine argues, relies on the social inequalities tied to the intellectual subjugation of the masses; a feat that is achieved when the elites develop and distribute a "propaganda" (p. 5) that constructs in turn a docile and "dependent" (p. 9) population. The control of the public takes place in the postindustrial society, that is, as a form of organized informational influence on behalf of the elites: "Ours is a society of alienation," Touraine proclaims, not "because it imposes police restriction, but because it seduces, manipulates, and enforces conformism" (p. 9).

The public is flush with material goods in the age of postindustrial abundance, in the era of baby-boomers and Keynesian welfare. This has led to the public's mental lethargy, Touraine believes. Having been "long enervated by satisfaction with its material success," he observes, the public in the postindustrial society has a difficult time resisting the elite's attempts for "social dominance," which "considers the whole spectrum of life-styles in society merely as tools to be fitted to the needs of this growth" (p. 11). The "new conflicts," and the possibility of a more equitable postindustrial society, demand for Touraine not merely the re-appropriation of material goods, as was the case in the industrial society, but the assertion of the public's control over the "direction of society as a whole" and the "defense" of the right to "self-determination" (p. 63).

The field of self-determination represents for Touraine a flicker of hope in the face of the elite's attempts to control the public mind through propaganda. In order to resist, people will need to cultivate an autonomous mind – a freedom of thought that amounts, under these new postindustrial conditions of informational control, to an act of political revolution. Social change, and eventually a more equitable society, lies thus in the capacity of the public to free itself form the mental chains of elite informational control; it is encapsulated in the public's ability to freely articulate political demands. Such an approach to the idea of intellectual freedom as a form of collective political expression, as I show later in this chapter, serves as the foundational structure of the idea of the social movement and appears in both Touraine's and Castells' work over the years.

For Touraine, political resistance in the postindustrial society thus exceeds the old industrial notions of revolt as something that is primarily governed by the power relations formed within the workplace. Resistance is not confined to classic distinctions between

labor and capital but extends to every facet of cultural life an expression. And for a Marxist such as Touraine, this is a major shift: Once politics becomes a matter of freedom of thought – rather than of the material conditions elicited by one's position in the structure of work – then it politics becomes a matter that involves one's lifestyle and personal expression. Politics becomes in other words ingrained into a way of life that permeates the rituals of the home and of the family, not just the workplace. "Now, in the face of power which uses the weapons of integration and manipulation and is consequently able to affect every facet of social life," Touraine observes, "resistance must be mobilized in terms of the entire personality" (p. 11).

For Touraine (1977), political resistance and the potential for democratic emancipation embraces, but also exceeds, individual will. The capacity to resist, and the ability to achieve a free consciousness that constitutes a "negation of domination," (p. 167) as he describes it, is not only an individual trait but also a capacity of the collective. This is what Touraine describes, according to Kivisto (1980), as a form of political resistance that takes shape as a "*classe populaire*" – that is, not as the aggregation of individual political wills, but as a coherent collective expression that emanates from the participation of "youth, students, and certain segments of the labor force" as well as "consumers, the women's movement, and ethnic and racial minorities" (p. 40). For Touraine these groups, which cut across the classic Marxist concept of labor, are not merely a melee of loosely associated individuals, but rather constitute a new kind of diverse "potential class" that is "capable of contesting the hegemony of the technocrats" (Kivisto, 1980, p. 40).

To put it in the language of this dissertation, then, Touraine's view of politics in the postindustrial era maintains on the one hand the republican and Marxist view of politics as collective action but also appears on the other hand open to liberal interpretations that locate politics in the individual subject. Touraine's classe populaire is not only made out of workers, but embraces a plurality of non-exclusive identities such as being a woman, a student, a consumer, and so on. Touraine thus adds a subjective element to an otherwise collective view of politics, thus making his theory amenable to both republican and liberal interpretations. Such a subjectivization of the collective – an attribution of psychological qualities to the many – is also present in Bell and in Gouldner as I showed in the previous chapter.

Touraine's Proximity to Gouldner and Bell: The Mind is Political

Touraine's approach parallels Alvin Gouldner's (1979), whose work is in part influenced by Daniel Bell (1973). In ways similar to Touraine, Gouldner argues *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*, that the postindustrial society is a space of conflict between the New Class of the managerial "intelligentsia" (p. 1) and a broad class of information workers[11]. For Gouldner, who like Touraine and Bell is also a theorist with Marxist roots, the New Class appropriates worker creativity when it imposes a soft kind of persuasion – a mild propaganda, if you will – as opposed to demanding a mindless compliance to the inequalities formed within and outside the workplace.

[11] The classic industrial era divisions between the working class and capitalists still matter in the new society, but they fade away in the background of Gouldner's and Bell's narratives as these theorists turn their attention to the social relations that arise inside the new information-based economy.

To put it a little differently, power in Gouldner's view of the postindustrial society, as well as in Bell's and Touraine's, is associated with the influence that elites may have over the hearts and minds of the workers (and of the citizens more broadly). Power is a matter of information management, of "*communication*" (p. 64) as Gouldner argues. He views in other words the capacity for intellectual autonomy – on both an individual and collective level [12] – into an act of political rebellion in the postindustrial society. If information is the way by which elites achieve the domination of the masses, then the public's political identity – its democratic essence I would suggest – lies in its ability to resist elite propaganda, and in its capacity to autonomously construct alternative ideological narratives that reflect the public interest writ large.

As I showed in chapter two of this dissertation, the very idea of intellectual freedom that is in turn oriented towards the common good is also central to Daniel Bell's approach to democracy. Extending and modifying a path carved out by scholars such as Riesman et al. (1950), Bell provides us with an image of an emerging society in which individuals operate democratically when they are in touch with their inner selves and when they are, simultaneously, in direct communication with the social other. While Bell's methodological focus is more on individuals than it is on collectives, the general thrust of the political thesis in his work is quite similar to that of Touraine and Gouldner: the idea that intellectual freedom, combined with a strong sense of other-directedness, is

[12] Gouldner (1979) argues that the New Class, and classes in general, have been "internally diversified" (p. 4) in the postindustrial society and in this sense – as I also discuss in the previous chapter – he introduces a liberal subjectivity within his analysis of class. He also, however, consciously embraces an analytical focus on the level of "class," which he understands as a concept that refers to "historically diverse groupings" (p.8). Gouldner blends, that is, the idea of class as a collective with the idea of individuals as differentiated members of that class.

situated at the center of democratic politics in the postindustrial society. For all three scholars, the ideal postindustrial citizen is supposed to be able to cherish individual freedom but to also be able to maintain a deep respect towards others, which is something that will motivates him or her, in turn, to undertake actions for the improvement of the common good.

For these three scholars, and as I show below for Castells as well, the very notion of politics is located in the balance between the self and the other, and on the flows of communication that act as the connective tissue between them. The analytical lens that these scholars employ, all four of whom begin from inside the Marxist tradition, and who as I argue in this dissertation move slowly but never completely towards liberalism, finds its balance – normatively speaking that is – in the middle ground that exists between liberal and republican ideals. For Castells and Touraine more particularly, these ideals come to life in the shape of what they describe as a social movement.

In the next part of this chapter, I focus on how Touraine and Castells articulate their approach to the concept of the social movement. In the years that succeeded the publication of Touraine's (1971) *Postindustrial Society*, they develop parallel theories that graft the industrial era's historical agency that was situated in the working class to the postindustrial era's social movement. In the following pages, I flesh out the details of social movements, focusing on the delicate conceptual scaffolding that these scholars construct that allows them to balance social movements between a republican approach, which privileges the common good, and a liberal view, which considers individuals as the center of the political universe. In their novel amalgam that is the social movement, I argue, these scholars suggest that social change will come about, ideally at least, from the

autonomous and willing orientation of individuals towards the common good – an orientation that emerges through the conscious acquisition of knowledge about their position in the sociopolitical structure.

What is a Social Movement?: Touraine and Castells in the Early Eighties

Not every mass movement is a social movement. When citizens gather to addresses a problem within a particular corner of civic life, or when they oppose a policy without providing viable alternatives, then they do not take part in a social movement. Such mobilizations may have a significant political impact, for sure, but the boundaries of what they are able to transform are limited by the established powers of the status quo. These movements in other words can affect some things, and bring about incremental changes, but they cannot challenge the very foundations of society and its core organizational tenets. Social movements on the other hand possess the capacity for radical change, which is something that distinguishes them from any other type of political movement: they are collectives that articulate a new, autonomously derived, and holistic vision for the reorganization of society's political values.

In this sense, social movements operate on the level of a social institution like the state, the church, and so on, because they develop an autonomous political language that is crafted with an aim to serve as the foundation of society and to operate as the mainstream worldview by which all other social relations are organized. In this sense, social movements compete with other social institutions for the definition of social organization and this process of conflict is what Touraine and Castells have both

described as the fight for the control of "historicity" (Touraine, 1971, 1981; Castells, 1983).

For Touraine and Castells, the capacity to fight for the control historicity emerges within social movements when its individual members achieve a self-awareness with regard to their structural position in the social map; when they realize the ways in which their private actions affect, reinforce, or at times challenge established social relations and power structures. Such an awareness – a self-knowledge about one's role in sociopolitical structures – leads in turn to a willingness to support the greater common good, these scholars suggest.

More so, both Castells and Touraine assume that awareness is a concept that operates on both individual and collective levels: On the one hand, individuals become aware of their political role in society and then they freely decide to join a social movement. But this individual awareness becomes, at the same time, the foundation of political awareness of the collective – of the social movement. The awareness that a social movement possesses is not reducible, however, to the aggregate of its individual parts. At this point one may wonder, how does this awareness exactly come about, and how does it combine individualism with an orientation to the collective good? How do Touraine and Castells combine in other words such a mixture of republican collective ideals with liberal individualist values? In the next few pages, I delve into an explanation of such an idiosyncratic approach – which scholars (eg.: Hannigan, 1985) have described as the approach of the French School of New Social Movements.

The Dual Process of Achieving Individual and Collective Awareness

Touraine and Social Movements

Social movements develop an autonomous social awareness that begins from, but which also goes beyond, the consciousness of each individual member. To achieve this blend of individual and collective subjectivity, Touraine (1981) argues that social movements emerge through a dual process of self-realization that begins with the individual, but which results in a collective consciousness that exceeds any single person inside the collective. What holds these two organizational levels together is the presence of a continuous flow of information – communication – between the individuals inside a dense social network. Over time, this process of communication calcifies into a broader political consciousness that belongs to the network, and becomes the intellectual foundation of a movement with a collective memory and will that is greater than the sum of its individual parts.

To offer an example: An individual – say a person who is employed as a middle manager of a large private company – will participate in a social movement when she realizes that her interests lie not only in the accumulation of personal goods, not merely in the improvement of private life, but in her capacity to fight for broader social causes that affect all other underprivileged people. Additionally, the individual in this example will not be motivated to participate merely because she is part of a broader class of working, middle-level, managers within a private firm – as classic Marxist theory would suggest – but rather because she also sees herself as part of a broader consortium of underprivileged identities of which she is a part, such as being a mother, a woman, a person of color, and so on.

This awareness of a multiplicity of marginalized identities in which she is a part allows her, in turn, to participate freely – her participation is an act of individual will – in a social movement that aims to improve the living conditions of all underprivileged identities. In this model of social action, thus, this person will be able to maintain both her individual freedom (a liberal value), and to actively embrace the common good (a republican value) as it is expressed in the language and activities of the social movement that she joins. Her social awareness, thus, emerges from her free will and evolves into an active form of conscious citizenship that contributes to the common good without restricting individual freedom.

As Touraine (1981) argues, social movements attain a level of consciousness that exceeds the mere aggregation of the intellects of their individual members. Every individual who is part of a social movement is in tune with the common good that the movement aims to achieve; they are in tune with a set of common goals that cannot, however, be broken down into an aggregation of the individual wills of its members. In this sense, social movements possess an independent political consciousness that is derived, but is not equal to, the self-awareness of its individual citizen members. As Scott (1991) observes about the work of Touraine on the issue, an observation that could also be applied to Castells, social movements have a political awareness of their own: "For Touraine social actors" (or in other words, social movements) "are not mere bearers of […] social relations; they actively produce and reproduce them. It is in this creative nature of social action in which society is 'self-produced' that the possibility of potential for control over historical processes rests" (p. 34).

For Touraine thus, and as I discuss a few paragraphs below for Castells as well, the process of political self-awareness operates on both individual and collective levels. It begins with individuals freely deciding to join a social movement because they have gone through a process of self-realization that allows them to see themselves as part of the broader landscape of social relations. Once individuals are self-conscious of their role in public life, then they willingly choose to join a social movement, in turn having a small impact in the processes of collective political awareness construction inside that movement. In this vein, noting on Touraine's argument that social movements attain awareness of their historical role, Richard Sennett (Touraine, 1981) observes that "Touraine […] rejects the notion that society moves towards ends which the members of society are unaware' (p. ix)."

To connect this thread with the previous chapter, the approach of Touraine, and as I discuss below of Castells as well, is parallel with the themes of political life as Daniel Bell presented them, especially with the idea that the postindustrial subject embraces an affective orientation towards others in society. For Bell the postindustrial ideal self is both aware of her inner self but also sensitized to the presence of others and their needs; this is an individual who is other-directed, as one of the postindustrial society's earliest articulations (Riesman, Glazer & Denney, 1950) quite appropriately described it.

Castells and Social Movements

Integrating individual freedom with the collective good without forgoing either is particularly pronounced in Castells' (1983) *The City and the Grassroots*. In this book, Castells develops his view of social movements while criticizing both Marxism and liberalism. He attacks Marxism for its failure to account for social change as the result of

free agency, and liberal theories of society for their inability to account for the presence of collective politics beyond the level of the individual. Then, he situates his own view somewhere in between. As Castells suggests, social movements organically emerge from the free will of individuals, but they are at the same time mobilizations that are irreducible to an aggregation of the opinions of its individual members.

To position his work within this middle ground, Castells first points out the inadequacy of Marxism in relation to the idea of social movements: The "concept of social movement as an agent of social transformation," he suggests, "is strictly unthinkable in the Marxist theory." Marxism proposes, erroneously Castells (1983) believes, that "there are social struggles and mass organizations that revolt in defense of their interests, but they cannot be conscious collective actors able to liberate themselves" (p. 299). Marxism, in other words, does not take into account a crucial component – a liberal component indeed – such as the presence of collective political agency in the process of historical progress. That is, social change and collective political life appears in Marxism predetermined by social structure; collective action is devoid of political agency and of a capacity for conscious direction of history. Under the Marxist frame, collective movements cannot "produce history of their own but, rather, [are] instrumental in the implementation of the next stage of a programmed historical development" (p. 299). Indeed, for Castells – and for Touraine as I have shown above – historical change is rather the opposite: it is the result of purposeful, willful – indeed liberally and freely emergent – collective social action.

While Castells places social movements beyond Marxism, he also disagrees with the classic liberal view that situates political consciousness solely on the level of

individuals. Joining Touraine, Castells considers that liberal theories, especially pluralist liberal theories (eg.: Mcarthy & Zald, 1979; Olson, 1965), are inadequate to explain the emergence of social movements as collective actors – an emergence that Castells argues has empirically observed in his study of, for example, the San Francisco gay community or of Madrid's cultural opposition to the Franco regime in the early eighties.

As one of the main representatives of the liberal pluralist tradition, Mancur Olson (1965), argues in *The Logic of Collective Action*, social movements grow as the result of individual forces – they are the result of the "combination of individual interests and common interests" that operate in ways that are analogous to the processes of the "competitive market" (p. 9). This market equivalency, however, critics point out and I believe Castells would agree, frames political action as a matter of individual-level action. This view in turn disallows the conceptualization of social movements as something that is more than the aggregation of private-interest and disallows, also, the idea of a social movement as a social actor with a memory and a will that exceeds the minds of its individual members.

The individualistic view of the liberal pluralists makes politics appear as a game of incremental change between competing political associations of individuals. Under the "pluralist theory of political science," as Castells observes, political life becomes an "inexorable bargaining" that aims to "re-equilibriate the system at a new level without altering its substance" (p. 292). Such a perspective is deeply conservative, as it denies from social movements the capacity to challenge the status quo as a whole; this liberal pluralist theory, Castells argues, is "incapable of explaining social transformation other than through a gradual modification of the established institutions" (p. 292).

Social movements cannot be explained through the lens of liberal pluralist theories because they are not mere aggregates of private interests that approach politics as a form of incremental bargaining. Rather, as Castells argues, social movements aim to "shake the institutions" to their core – mainly the "state" – and to achieve a radical reconstitution of how "norms are enforced, values preached, and property preserved" (p. 294). Liberal perspectives like Olson's, Castells proclaims, are "incapable of explaining social transformation other than through a gradual modification of the established institutions, a hypothesis that is rejected by most historical experience" (p. 294).

By criticizing both ends of the political theory spectrum – liberal pluralism and Marxism – Castells situates social movements somewhere in between. Castells' approach, as I argue later in this chapter, is closely aligned to Young's approach, which is in turn part and parcel of a broader view of democracy as a process of communicative interaction.

After *The City and the Grassroots,* in which he elaborates his theory of social movements, Castells turns his analytical lens to the study of information technologies as a major infrastructural component of rising forms of social organization. In final few pages of Part I of this chapter, I take a look at the work that introduces some of his views on the matter – Castells' (1989) book *The Informational City*, which was the last one before, and in many ways a precursor to, his magnum opus trilogy called *The Information Age*.

Neoliberalism, Technology, and the State in Castells' Informational City

Social movements take the back seat in Castells' *Informational City*. In that book, Castells studies the role of information technologies as the key infrastructure of the

postindustrial society – what he (1996; 1997; 1998) later described as the "Network Society." In the pages below, I interrogate Castells' book with an aim to explicate how his approach differs from Touraine's and Bell's, particularly with regard to the role of the state in the postindustrial society.

Castells argues that his work in the *Informational City* is a continuation of the "two main theorists of the 'post-industrial society'… Alain Touraine… and Daniel Bell" (p. 17). These two theorists, Castells suggests, view "information processing" as the "fundamental activity conditioning the effectiveness and productivity of all processes of production, distribution, consumption, and management" (p. 17) within the new society. At the same time, however, Castells abandons his predecessors' approach to the role of the state in the postindustrial society. Bell and Touraine, Castells argues, believed that postindustrialism would become the dominant form of social organization through the support of the state. Touraine and Bell, he notes, both saw the postindustrial society as something that emerged out of a "process by which the state sets up a framework within which large-scale organizations, both private and public design strategic goals" (p. 18).

Yet for Castells the state's role is minimized in the new information based society – and that happens, he suggests, because of the congruence of two historical forces: On the one hand, the rise of the "*informational mode of development*" (p. 2) and on the one hand the "simultaneous emergence" (p. 2) of a new and aggressive "'laissez fair'" capitalism (p. 28). The blending of these two historical conditions – informational networks and deregulated capitalism – was something that Bell and Touraine did not and could not foresee, Castells implies. Rising prominently in the nineteen-eighties – a decade after Bell's and Touraine's original work – these two forces came together,

Castells suggests, in the format of a "historical coincidence" (p. 28) that recast in turn the original mold of the information society and propagated a new and "durable" (p. 28) type of libertarian-capitalist society that left no room for a strong regulatory state. In this new informational society, Castells notes, the "libertarian spirit of capitalism finally found itself at home at the last frontier where organizational networks and information flows dissolve locales and supersede societies" (p. 32).

In his *Informational City*, Castells does not substantively deal with social movements. He articulates however the neoliberal vein in his thought – one that reappears in full force in the first volume (1996) of his *Information Age* trilogy authored a few years later. The neoliberal argument in Castells work refers mainly to the idea that the role of the state is supplanted by information-centric networks of global elites that govern society by operating primarily on the global, rather than on the state, level of governance.

So what is the role of social movements in the construction of information-based democracies according to Castells? And how do they come about as collectives that simultaneously promote individual freedom? In this chapter, I have tried to answer these questions by looking first at the intellectual history that precedes Castells' *Information Age* trilogy. In the part of this chapter that follows, I delve into a close reading of Castells' magnum opus – a three-volume book authored at an opportune time for the study of the relationship between information technologies and society; a time in which a new medium called the Internet slowly emerged, and which was invested early on with a particular set of culturally-specific political qualities, especially by many of its early adopter communities. Deciphering how Castells' narration situates social movements at

the political center of a rising information society is the task of the remaining pages of this chapter.

Part II

A Close Reading of Castells' Information Age trilogy

In the *Information Age* trilogy, a work that captivated massive scholarly interest (see: Stalder, 2006; Webster, 2006), Castells (1996; 1997; 1998) lays out an argument about the rising importance of information flows within social networks as the new basis of economic and political life. Much critical scholarship (eg.: Ampuja & Koivisto, 2014; Fisher, 2010; Garnham, 2004; Marcuse, 2002) lambasts Castells' arch of argumentation, especially for the claim – and implicit legitimation – of information technologies as driving the growth of neoliberalism. Taken together, these scholars take issue with Castells' seemingly neutral language that plays down the detrimental social effects of the information society's decline of the welfare state, increase of labor precarity, and dismantling of communal solidarity in favor of a flexible and free-wheeling neoliberal individualism.

My approach does not deny these critiques, but rather refocuses our attention on a rather less studied part of Castells' work, which presents technological infrastructures not in their capacity to preserve the status quo but rather as tools that can promote radical grassroots social change. My aim in this part of the chapter is to unearth the relationship between social movements as an agent of social change and the democratic ideals that support Castells' idealized view of this relationship. In the pages below, I perform a close reading of the *Information Age*, as I reach beyond the empirical veneer of Castells'

language to figure out the degree to which his underlying political theory relates to specific models of democracy.

In the pages below, I map out Castells' broader analytical canvas as he presents it in his *Information Age* trilogy – a canvas in which social movements play a significant yet only partial role. To succinctly describe the relevant characteristics of Castells' theory – which in turn help understand the surrounding environment within which social movements are expected to operate – I explain what Castells means by the conflict between networks of global elites and institutions (what he describes as the Net) and expressions of collective identity (what he identifies as the Self). The Net consists of a configuration of interconnected institutions of the status quo – eg.: global markets and corporations, or regional political and state networks such as the European Union – and of the global elites who govern them. The other pole of the conflict is the Self, which consists of three major types of collective identity: (a) the legitimizing, (b) the resistance, and (c) the project identity. These identities represent for Castells the three ideotypes of political existence in the information society; thus, analyzing them is central for understanding Castells' broader normative framework and underlying democratic ideals.

Castells considers that every collective identity, no matter which one of the three, is constructed through processes of communication – of information flows over space and time – between nodes in the social network. The three identities are different in many ways, but in terms of the political ideals embroidered in their emergence as processes of communication, the first two bear many similarities, while the third one – the project identity – is quite different and is synonymous to the concept of the social movement. The first two, the legitimizing and resistance identities are tied to and are dependent from

already existing social institutions. The legitimizing identity represents a dependent political consciousness because it is produced by the established institutions of "civil society" (Castells, 1997, p. 9) – institutions that are already dominant such as the state, the church, corporations, and so on. The resistance identity on the other hand is also dependent, but that is because it is produced as a mindless reaction to existing powers inscribed in the Net. Resistance identity wants to oppose the status quo but it cannot articulate an independent set of alternative political values around which society can reorganize. In the absence of the status quo – of the Net in other words – both identities collapse.

These two identities, thus, do not grow outside the control of institutional forces and cannot develop an autonomous political consciousness that would allow them to successfully challenge the Net. The autonomy of consciousness that these two identities lack, as I have shown in the first part of this chapter, is the indispensable element that leads for Castells (and for Touraine) to revolutionary and democratic collective action. This change is represented by social movements, or as Castells now describes them by the project identity, which encapsulates the potential for social change since it is the only one that emerges through autonomous and grassroots political action that exists outside established institutions.

One of my aims in this chapter – and the main thread that runs across this dissertation – is to uncover the implicit relationships between information society scholars and democratic ideals. Manuel Castells' continuing fascination with social movements reveals, I argue, a close relationship between his own democratic ideals and the theory of democracy as Iris Marion Young (2000; 2011) imagined it. Young's theory

relies on the idea that communication is the foundation of a democratic community. For Young, communication comes in different shapes and sizes: it can appear in the form of a speech-based deliberation, but it can also emerge as a form of protest or as a politically engaged artistic expression, to give but a few examples. While less developed than Young's, Castells' view of social movement parallels Young's diverse understanding of democratic communication. For both Castells and Young, that is, democracy grows out of a dynamic process of free-forming, self-aware, and broadly supported social movements.

In the final pages of this chapter I analyze a particular example of project identity that Castells (1997) provides in the second volume of his trilogy – the construction of global feminist movement – and I draw parallels between this example, Castells' previous views about social movements, and the model of democracy as articulated by Young.

Situating Social Movements in The Conflict Between the Net and the Self

The Net

The Net represents the new type of institutional arrangement in the postindustrial era, and it is architected as a network of interconnected nodes of institutions and of the global elites who govern them. The Net links together institutions of different kinds and sizes such as national governments, global stock markets, multinational or regional corporations, all of which operate within networked architectures of information flows that are flatter than the kinds of hierarchical bureaucratic organizations that dominated the industrial era.

The institutional structures that lose most of their power in the new kind of society are, in fact, the nation-states. As Castells (1996) observes, this happens at least in part because of the growth of international markets, which bypass national sovereignties and flow abundantly inside and outside national borders. In this new world of global markets, the "nation-state is increasingly powerless in controlling monetary policy, deciding its budget, organizing production and trade, collecting its corporate taxes, and fulfilling its commitments to provide social benefits," Castells argues (1996, p. 254). In other words, in the postindustrial society there is an "*increasing dependence of governments on global capital markets*" (p. 247).

Information technologies play a crucial role in producing the conditions under which global capital flows bypass nation-states, undermining the power of governments and the robustness of their once dominant welfare states. Communication across nations and other regional or global organizations, such as multinational corporations or even global networks of crime, Castells argues, bring about the weakening of the industrial era's social stability – a stability that was founded exactly on the capacity of the nation-states to restrict global flows of capital. Communication – information flows on a global level – makes the world a smaller place and the nation-state almost irrelevant: "The diversification of communication nodes," Castells notes, and "the link up of all media in a digital hypertext, opening up the way for interactive multimedia, and the inability to control satellites beaming across borders or computer-mediated communication over the phone line, blew up traditional lines of [state-based] regulatory defense" (pp. 254-255).

The last line of defense of nation-states, Castells suggests, is to restructure across regional or global network lines, becoming in turn mere "*nodes of a broader network of*

power" (p. 304). An example of such a node is the European Union, which is a conglomeration of nation-states that gave up part of their national sovereignty to a supra-national entity, in return gaining some control over the "*global disorder*" (p. 267) of global capital flows that supersede the power of any single nation state.

Additionally, global and regional corporations are important nodes in the networks of information flows. The "*main shift*" in the organization of modern corporations, Castells (1996) argues, can be "*characterized as the shift from vertical bureaucracies to the horizontal corporation*" (p. 164). Corporations are entangled into flat regional or global network infrastructures, which facilitated by digitally mediated flows of information. From the age of mass factory production in the industrial era, Castells observes, we have now moved into an era of global networks of production that operate in blatant disregard of local state laws and regulations.

Taken together, corporations, markets, and even weakened nation-states, constitute an interlinked institutional structure that operates on regional and global scale on the basis of the logic of the network. These institutions, that is, lose their independent power – a power once located in the ability to wall off information, capital, and goods within their boundaries – and are subject to freer, and much more unpredictable, globalized flows of information, capital, and people that circulate between and through them. These institutions, and the global elites that govern them, constitute collectively what Castells describes as the Net – a structure that operates as the information society's establishment; as its new and global status quo.

The Space of Flows and Elite Power

The Net represents a status quo that is not anymore bound by the rules, norms, and cultures of a particular geographic locale, as was the case in the industrial society. The institutions of the Net and their associated governing elites, Castells (1996) argues, operate beyond particular locales. Yet, they exert tremendous power over them by controlling, allowing or denying, local access to global flows of information, capital, and people. The architectures represent a new pattern, a new realm, of social power that Castells describes with the term space of flows (p. 376). For Castells, the distribution of power in the new society is:

> constructed around flows: flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organizational interaction, flows of images, sounds, and symbols. Flows are not just one element of the social organization: they are the expression of processes *dominating* our economic, political, and symbolic life. (p. 412).

The dominance of the space of flows in the information society means that the connection between space and time as it once appeared in the industrial era is now broken, Castells suggests. Space is defined in the new society by the type and volume of flows that go through it, rather than by the things or the people that operate within its physical boundaries. For example, a person who works in the New York stock exchange is closer in terms of power to someone who works in the Tokyo stock exchange than to someone who sits in a neighboring New York city square. New York and Tokyo are interconnected through communication technologies of information that facilitate capital flows, while the person in the square is worlds apart from the financiers. The new metric

of social distance and social power thus, as Castells (1996) argues, is measured by the capacity to control the flows of information between two nodes within a network; flows now topple, that is, the importance of geographical location, becoming the "purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange in interaction between physically disjointed positions by social actors on the economic, political, and symbolic structures of society" (p. 412). In Castells' theory, therefore, communication between centers of power that are physically distanced becomes the foundation and prime expression of power. As he suggests, "the network of communication is the fundamental spatial configuration: places do not disappear, but their logic and their meaning become absorbed in the network" (p. 412).

These flows of information are for Castells (1996) controlled by the Net. At the same time, as I discuss later in this chapter in the part about the Self, such a dislocation of space from time – the rise of the space of flows as the new dominant logic of social organization – also led to the growth of related oppositional forces; it has helped construct the resistant and project identities that, albeit embracing different methods and ends, aim to reclaim the loss of geographically situated meaning in the age of information.

The dominance of the Net and the related rise of a space of flows carves out, as Castells argues, new areas of social inequality. At the center of the Net, wielding control over the direction of its institutions, stand what Castells (1996) describes as the "technocratic-financial-managerial elite that occupies the leading positions in our societies" (p. 415). Such elites enjoy a power that they draw from their position in the space of flows, which transcends local cultures and the regulations and limitations on

flows that those localities may try to impose: “Elites are cosmopolitan” Castells notes, while all other “people are local” (p. 415). The elites’ “space of power and wealth is projected throughout the world, while people’s life and experience is rooted in places, in their culture, in their history” (pp. 415-416). These elites represent, as I show in this chapter, the one pole of political friction in the information society, with the other being ideally for Castells the social movement.

The elites exert power over decision-making processes within the networks of the Net and the associated space of flows. They stand at the center of a concentric power architecture, in which the farther out a social group stands the less power it possesses. For Castells, such a structure of power with the elites at the core is not merely a characteristic of authoritarian regimes; it also appears in Western societies that claim be democratic in the conventional sense of the term. The difference is that in democratic societies the elites need to veil their power more diligently from the masses: “The more a society is democratic in its institutions,” Castells (1996) observes, “the more the elite will have to become clearly distinct from their populace, so avoiding the excessive penetration of political representatives in the inner world of strategic decision-making” (p. 416).

In the information society, elites hide their power through the manipulation of communication flows and the cultural symbols that operate within them; they do not merely disappear behind physical barriers, but rather exist in plain view, all the while manipulating the stereotypes that the public harbors about them. Like his advisor Alain Touraine (1971), who argued in his *Postindustrial Society* that the elites employ a propaganda in order to affect the minds and hearts of the public, Castells too argues that elite domination is a matter of informational warfare, an issue of influence and

persuasion. The elites don't merely own capital but they wield dominance over public thought and the communication of symbols: "The real social domination," Castells notes, "stems from the fact that cultural codes are embedded in the social structure in such a way that the possession of these codes opens access to the power structure without the elite needing to conspire to bar access to its networks" (p. 416).

The elites thus possess the keys to the cultural codes that open the door to power – a power that lies not so much in the possession of material goods, but in the capacity to communicate a particular language and life aesthetic – a lifestyle – that is in turn associated and helps maintain social privilege. Elite power is sustained through the projection of a symbolic pattern of social conduct that flows globally, but which only the insider elites can legitimately perform. In this, Castells offers a critique of the nature of power in the information society that is similar not only to his advisor's, Alain Touraine, but also to Alvin Goulnder's (1979), who similarly talked about the power of persuasion exerted by the New Class. For Castells (1996), the global elites rule by controlling the flows of communication that are then molded into an "increasingly homogenous lifestyle"; a lifestyle that unites them as they transcend the "cultural borders of all societies," and which is signified by "the regular use of SPA installations (even when travelling), and the practice of jogging; the mandatory diet of grilled salmon and green salad, …the ubiquitous laptop, computer; the combination of business suits and sportswear" (p. 417). Being elite means communicating a certain lifestyle, not merely exerting control over the means of material production.

Finally, as Castells suggests the elite alone cannot exert dominance over the institutions of the Net. They are aided in their purpose by set of social groups who

possess less power; by a "series of symbolic socio-spatial hierarchies" that try to emulate the elites' lifestyle. These "lower levels," Castells observes, develop a capacity to "mirror the symbols of power and appropriate such symbols by constructing second-order spatial communities that also tend to isolate themselves from the rest of society, in a succession of hierarchical segregation processes that, together, are tantamount to socio-spatial fragmentation" (pp. 416-417). Taken together, these social architectures consist of the privileged side of a new social structure that harbors new kinds of social divisions in the information society.

Conventional Democratic Politics

In most cases, a democratic society operates under the dominating cultural presence of the elites, which is a condition of conventional political life that Castells (1997) describes as "*informational politics*" (p. 310). As he notes, "the key point" in this condition "is that electronic media (including not only television and radio, but all forms of communication, such as newspapers and the Internet) have become the privileged space of politics" (p. 311). This means that regular politicians – and even social movements to some degree – will need to have their image and speech included in the media if they want to have any kind of political success. In this new world of information, Castells observes, conventional politics is played out mainly through the processes of "political communication and information," which are in turn "captured in the space of the media. Outside of the media there is only political marginality" (p. 312), he argues.

Castells (1997) does not, however, provide in his trilogy a sustained analysis of the ways in which media structures may affect the distribution of political speech in the

information society. His analytical lens is rather stagnant on this intellectual front, providing a rehash of well established media theories, most of which focus on the standard critiques about the rise of a "'horse race politics'" that is "reported as an endless game" of "political ambitions, maneuvers, strategies and counter-strategies (p. 321). In this sense, Castells provides us with a cursory and quite familiar to media scholars analysis of the effects of private media ownership, advertising, and deregulation on politics (see: pp. 318-321). He also steps onto established grounds with regard to the role of objectivity in journalism, arguing quite uncritically that journalists usually "report" but do "not take sides" and that "news analysis must be documented, opinion must be regulated, and detachment is the rule" (p. 315) for journalism in the age of information.

I would argue that Castells' contribution does not lie in his analysis of conventional political life, in which he suggests that mainstream mass media reproduce the status quo. While Castells' discussion of these issues offers insight into his theoretical lens, it is mainly derivative of other work within communication theory. In the pages below, I provide instead an interpretation of Castells' central argument about the relationship between social movements, information technologies, and social change – an argument that offers a novel and groundbreaking, especially for its time, view of the political potential of new kinds of interactive media formats. To do so, I turn to Castells' concept of the Self from which the identity of the social movement emerges as the genuinely democratic potentiality of the information society.

The Self and Social Movements: Communication as Collective Consciousness

Identity Building as Social Interaction

The Self signifies for Castells the rise of cultural identity as the new center of political life. Like his advisor, Alain Touraine, and following a path of analysis relevant to his prior work, Castells argues that cultural identity constitutes the foundation of the information society and of the distribution of power within it. "In a post-industrial society," Castells (1996) notes, "on which cultural services have replaced material goods at the core of production, it is the defense of the subject, in its personality and in its culture, against the logic of apparatuses and markets that replaces the idea of class struggle" (p. 23). The expression of the self – a cultural way of life – amounts thus to a deeply political process in the new society of information.

To define identity, Castells turns to the work of Craig Calhoun (1994) as well as to Anthony Giddens (1991). He mobilizes these two scholars in order to resurface, and further buttress theoretically, some of his earlier arguments about cultural identity as the byproduct of communication between the self and the social other (eg.: Castells, 1983). For example, Castells embraces Calhoun's (1994) argument that identity emerges from the dual process of "self-recognition" and a "recognition by others" (p. 20). Identity is "always constructed and situated," as Calhoun argues, "amid a flow of contending cultural discourses" (p. 12); that is, identity is for Calhoun a dynamic negotiation between the self and others within certain cultural milieu. As Calhoun also suggests, identity is malleable and flexible; it is "never altogether separable" from "claims to be known in specific ways by others" (as cited in Castells, 1997, p. 6). Consider here how such a view of identity as a construction of dynamic awareness between the self and the

social other resembles the dual process that Touraine and Castells embraced in their theory of social movements, which I analyzed in part I of this chapter.

Castells also borrows Giddens' (1991) view on the matter, which is not that different from Calhoun's, who also argues that identity is "reflexively understood by a person in terms of her/his biography" (as quoted in Castells, 1997, p. 10). Identity is for both Giddens and Castells formed through the processes of conscious communication between the individual and the collective. Seen as the result of communication between the self and the social outside, identity in other words boils down to the practice of maintaining and performing relationships that are "rooted" in "social structure," Castells (1997, p. 7) argues.

The problem with identity today, Castells (1997) suggests following Giddens, is that the information society "calls into question" (p. 11) the conscious communication between the self and the other. The new age of information – the dominance of a new society that emanates from the power of the space of flows – disassociates the construction of identity from a sense of place and time, and thus destabilizes it. The failure to develop an identity that is situated within a culturally and historically meaningful context leads, in turn, to the construction of either a legitimizing or a resistance identity, Castells argues. These two identities are constructed through communicative processes that are not conscious or self-reflexive. That is, these identities are not autonomous, but their construction is rather dependent on their interaction with the global forces of the Net. These two identities thus lead, Castells argues, to the development of a political consciousness that either mirrors the logic of the Net

(legitimizing), or mindlessly aims to oppose it (resistance)[13]. Below, I further analyze these two identities and then turn to Castells' project identity, which represents an autonomous type of identity formation.

Three Types of Identity and their Relationship to Democratic Models

The Resistance Identity. The tensions between the institutions of the Net and the public's need for historically- and geographically- grounded meaning, Castells observes, has forced many to look back into history in an attempt to reconstruct modern communities around traditional values. It is the need to recapture some of the meaning that was lost in the era of globalized information flows that leads many to the particularities of "history, geography, or biology" that become, in turn, the new "boundaries of resistance…against otherwise unbearable oppression" (p. 9) by the institutions of the Net. These resistance identities in other words, form in opposition to the Net and represent a return to an imagined or actual historical, biological, or geographical identity that provides a meaningful context in the face of the impersonal realities of the information age. Resistant identities are, as Castells describes them, a reaction on behalf of the public against the Net's "dominant institutions/ideologies" (p. 9). These identities focus on the past and they cannot thus maintain an open mind towards the future – their social values are static rather than dynamic, and they lack the capacity to engage in "reciprocal communication" (p. 9) with the rest of society. Their reactionary and closed nature makes these identities unable to construct a viable and holistic political

[13] While this is not the core aim of this chapter, I hope that my analysis of the differences between the three identities contributes towards clearing some confusion in current scholarship in this area. For example, see Marcuse (2002).

alternative for the democratic reorganization of society. By remaining closed up, they circumscribe the freedom of thought of its members within a futile yet powerful tribalism that instills clear markers between insiders and outsiders; between friends and foes. Usually built around a single identity issue – the revival of some prior form of nationalism, gender, or religious dynamic – these communities remain nothing more than a "fragmented constellation of tribes" (p. 9) that individually and mindlessly oppose the Net.

The lack of communicative channels with the rest of society disallows these communities to develop a reflexive identity, something that as I discussed above is one of the key components of an ideal postindustrial identity according to Castells. In fact, Castells (1997) offers some examples of these kinds of communities, which span the globe as well as the ideological spectrum. Resistance identities may emerge in the form of a leftist resistance, such as the revolutionary Zapatistas in Mexico (p. 68), and they may also appear in the form of a conservative nationalist or religious community, such as the American Militia or the Patriot movement. The latter's "ideological galaxy encompasses," Castells suggests, "extreme conservative organizations" and embraces the "whole array of traditional, white supremacist, neo-nazi, and anti-semitic groups including the Ku-Klux-Klan" (p. 86). For Castells, the key identifying factor that places these groups in the resistant type of identity is not the content of their ideological positions, but rather the manner in which they expresses their opposition to the rest of society – a manner that draws strict and unsurpassable group boundaries, and which denies the possibility of open communication between those communities and the social other.

Indeed, most communities in the information society, Castells (1997) observes, are formed under the terms of a resistance identity. "With the exception of a small elite of *globapolitans* (half beings, half flows), people all over the world resent loss of control over their lives, over their environment, over their jobs, over their economies, over their governments, over their countries, and, ultimately, over the fate of the Earth" (p. 69), he notes. Many choose to react to these developments through mindless opposition, by sheltering around particular single-issue identities, by raising boundaries between us and them, and by struggling to create a sense of cultural meaning through a polemic against what appears to them as an alienating and impersonal postindustrial society.

The Legitimizing Identity. On the other hand, the legitimizing identity develops not as a form of opposition to the Net but rather as its natural extension. The legitimizing identity is a form of political consciousness that is dependent upon, and limited by, the pre-existing ideological boundaries of the institutions of the Net. Therefore, it is a conservative identity because it does not aim to change society, but only looks to perpetuate the dynamic of its existing social relations. The legitimizing identity is static, Castells argues, because it "generates a civil society; that is, a set of organizations and institutions, as well as a series of structured and organized actors, which reproduce, albeit sometimes in a conflictive manner, the identity that rationalizes the sources of structural domination (p. 8).

It is also worth noting here, since many scholars use this term, for Castells (1997) a "civil society" is a structure of the status quo; it is dominated by established institutions such as "the Church(es), unions, parties, cooperatives, civic associations, and so on," which in turn "prolong the dynamics of the state but, on the other hand, are deeply rooted

among people" (p. 9). Castells recognizes that such statements "may come as a surprise to some readers, since civil society generally suggests a positive connotation of democratic social change. However, this is the original formulation of civil society," (p. 9) he notes, which he borrows from Gramsci.

Taken together, resistance and legitimizing identities represent lower levels of political consciousness because they are dependent on the Net. They both reflect a type of political collective that grows within, or operates in mindless opposition to, existing institutions and global elites; these two identities are byproducts, to put it a little differently, of the social establishment and as such they lack the independent political will that is necessary in order to develop a holistic proposal for the reorganization of society beyond existing power dynamics. As Castells suggests, while identities are formed primarily in terms of the resistance rather than the legitimizing identity, none of them holds a truly emancipatory political potential; such a potential is only attributed to project identity, or in other words, to the social movement.

The answer to the question of when and how a project identity develops lies in the ability of the public – a public understood as both an aggregation of individuals and as a collective – to cultivate a reflexive process of identity formation. This process refracts open forms of communication that embrace "intimacy on the basis of trust" between people and make possible, in turn, the "redefinition of identity" as "fully autonomous *vis a vis* the networking logic of dominant institutions and organizations" (p. 11). In a society in which most people react against the Net, Castells points out, project identity emerges as an independent community that is aware of its role in the pursuit of historicity (to refer here to a term that Castells and Touraine both used heavily in the early eighties). Project

identity aims to redefine, without however destroying, the values embraced by the institutions of the Net as a whole.

Democracy in Social Movement: Project Identity. As I proposed earlier in this chapter, and as I discuss further below, project identity encapsulates a higher form of political consciousness than the other two because it emerges autonomously as the result of open and reflexive communication between the self and the social other. Good examples of project identity are for Castells (1997) the global environmental and the feminist movement, both of which have been "proactive" in their aim to transform "human relationships at their most fundamental level" (p. 2).

Echoing Touraine's view on social movements and his own earlier approach, Castells (1997) argues that project identity possesses a consciousness that is able to challenge the established institutions of the Net, and are able to provide a holistic alternative for how they could be rearranged in more equitable ways. As he points out, project identity refers to the cases when:

> Social actors, on the basis of whichever cultural materials available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by doing so, seek the transformation of overall social structure. This is the case, for instance, when feminism moves out from the trenches of resistance of women's identity and women's rights, to challenge patriachalism, thus the patriarchal family, thus the entire structure of production, reproduction, sexuality, and personality on which societies have been historically based. (p. 8)

Project identity fights in other words on the level of historicity – it confronts other social institutions in its aim to redefine social life in the image of its own political

consciousness. Acting as a collective, its members do not merely oppose existing social institutions – as is the case with the resistance identity – but rather develop, through self-reflection and through communication with others, an independent understanding of their role in the progress of history. As I show below through my analysis of Castells' view of the feminist movement, the emergence of project identity is almost identical to the view that the French School had on social movements – project identities develop through a process that begins with individual self-awareness and turns, over time, into a dynamic collective consciousness that exceeds the aggregation of the opinions of its individual members.

For Castells, that is, project identity is neither solely an individual nor only a collective process, but rather grows through the interaction between the two. Referencing Alain Touraine, Castells (1997) suggests that the subject is constructed on the one hand through "the desire of being an individual, of creating a personal history, of giving meaning to the whole realm of experiences of individual life" (p. 10). On the other hand, project identity is, Castells suggests referencing Touraine once more, also a property of the collective because political "subjects are not individuals, even if they are made by and in individuals. They are the collective social actor through which individuals reach holistic meaning in their experience" (p. 10).

In the pages that follow, I analyze a central example in Castells' social movement narrative: the global feminist movement. I use this example in order to elucidate the ways in which social movements attain political consciousness through a process of communication that is situated between the self and the social other. Through this example, I also highlight the ways in which Castells' theory relates to the democratic

theory of I.M. Young (2000; 2011). Both Castells and Young converge on the view that diverse forms of communicative expression can bridge two typically incommensurable edges of political theory: The republican ideal of the common good and the liberal ideal of individual freedom.

The Women's Social Movement: Democracy Through Communication

What distinguishes the women's movement from other movements such as the Zapatistas or the American Militia[14], is that it does not aim to merely oppose but rather to radically replace the dominant narratives embedded inside the logic of the institutions of the Net. The women's movement, which emerged during the seventies as Castells (1997) notes, intends to affect change in favor of women not merely in one domain of social life but rather in the "entire human experience" (p. 136). This movement aims in other words to reposition women's structural position of power not only in one social domain, such as for example within the workplace, inside the family, or within religion, and so on, but within all such social domains simultaneously.

The women's movement proposes a holistic transformation of social relations because, unlike other movements, it emerges through a communication among its members that is openly conducted, built on trust, and operates outside the dominating logic of the Net. This kind of communication leads to the construction of a deep feminist consciousness that is autonomous in its political aims and in its capacity to fight for the control of historicity. Following Jane Mansbridge (1995), Castells thus defines feminism as a form of communication – as a "discursively created movement" (as cited in Castells,

[14] To be sure, Castells does not necessarily deny the potential of resistance identities to turn, at some historical juncture, into project identities.

1997, p. 175) that can change society through the communicative development of a common political consciousness.

This does "not imply that feminism is just discourse," Castells (1997) argues, "or that feminist debate, as expressed in the writings of various women, theorists and academics, is the primordial manifestation of feminism" (p. 175). The feminist movement comes in various shapes and sizes of discourse, he claims; it can be discourse as speech, as protest, as artistic expression, as representation in media, and so on. From a democratic theory, then, this places Castells' view of feminism a form of diverse communicative activity in a theoretical plane that parallel's Young's (2000) idea of democratic communication as a manifold format that includes but is not limited to speech-centric models of democracy.

Communication constructs social identity, and this is a process that – like Touraine's and Castells' earlier views of how social movements emerge – develops first on a level of individual self-awareness that culminates, and becomes politically relevant, through one's communication with others as well as with the collective as a whole. As Castells (1997) argues, following Whittier (1995), the feminist movement is based on the self-awareness of each individual member, but it is also based on the interactions between different "political generations and micro-cohorts" (p. 181) that shape the movement on a collective level. The feminist movement exists both on an intra-individual level, that is, but also on the level of the group. And we can see how the group level appears as a conceptual category for Castells, for example, in cases where members of different cohorts within a movement share not only their personal views but also the collective memories of the movement's struggles: "A generation of movement veterans," Castells

argues, "carry its key elements into societal institutions and other social movements" (pp. 181-182).

Social movement veterans are a good example for visualizing the ways in which political consciousness exists on individual and collective levels simultaneously. Through their activity, veterans cross-pollinate ideas across different generations; they carry and help maintain some of the movement's core political ideas across time and space. When veterans communicate with new activists, Castells suggests, they serve not only as "agents of change themselves, …but also as resources for the resurgence of a future wave of mobilization" (p. 182) that in turn "changes as new participants enter the movement and redefine its collective identity" (Whittier, as quoted in Castells, 1997, p. 182).

Thus, the political consciousness of the social movement – in this case the feminist movement – cannot be solely located in the minds of individuals. It exists also beyond them, situated in the flows of networked information that connects them. The movement's consciousness is not a static property but is rather something that is continuously negotiated through processes of communication between the movement's members, in the process also affecting and being affected by the exits and entries of individuals. For Castells, and for Touraine before him, the political consciousness of social movements cannot be reduced to a mere aggregation of its individual minds, in other words. Neither is that political consciousness solely, however, an attribute of the social structure. The collective mind of the movement – its "communicative mind" (p. 372), to use a term Castells (1996) applies on a different but relevant discussion in his *Information Age* trilogy – is located inside the flows of interaction that link individuals to each other and to the social whole.

The collective identity of the movement exists as a dynamic process – it is continuously reactive and reflective of the needs of the individuals without however reducing the collective good to those individuals. A social movement develops and is sustained through open and free communication processes that, ideally at least, lead to an autonomous consciousness that emerges from the "grassroots" (p. 187) as Castells (1997) agues. And although Castells does not describe them directly as such, I would argue that his social movements embrace democratic ideals that veer close to communicative approaches to democracy, especially I.M Young's approach, which considers democracy to be the result of a collective will that emerges out of a communicative interaction that does not suppress the capacity of individual expression.

Conclusion: The Democratic Ideals of the Castellian Universe

Within Castells' otherwise empirical language lies a subtle yet powerful democratic prescription: Social change can take place when the public appropriates information that is available inside social networks in order to build movements that challenge the established cultural ways of life. These social movements are grassroots collectives that develop an intellectual autonomy that lends them, in turn, a strong democratic legitimacy.

A social movement is a network of free individuals, who consciously join because they are keenly aware of their own social role – a role that at times, as I suggest in this chapter, may require them to act in ways that oppose a narrow understanding of politics as the expression of private interest. Individual freedom, a liberal value, is connected for Castells with the common good, a republican value, through a reflexive communication

between the individual and the social other; this kind of open, self-aware, and free communication encapsulates in turn the potential for the development of a proper democratic society. Public access to information, more than just access to the means of material production, the Castellian model implies, can spark individual intention to join social movements, which will lead to the active support of political causes that improve the collective good.

Like Daniel Bell and Alain Touraine, Manuel Castells too began as a Marxist theorist who gradually turned his sights towards liberalism by embracing the significance of individual freedom as a crucial part of democratic life. And also like his predecessors in the postindustrial strand of thought, as I show in this chapter, Castells never completely accepts the liberal doctrine as he situates individual freedom within an understanding of the collective good as something that is more than a mere aggregation of private interests. Indeed, Castells' theory looks more like a palimpsest of liberal and Marxist theories rather than a painting that eliminates older theoretical approaches in favor of the new.

Castells has been criticized as a neoliberal, and while I do not disagree with this view, I hope to have also demonstrated in this chapter that his theory is also open to the idea of democratic resistance and change. The political antidote to neoliberalism exists for Castells in the freely emerging and collectively maintained social movements. The unifying thread that supports the potential of social movements is woven out of the normative cloth of democratic ideals that, even if not directly stated in these terms, allow Castells to envision a democratic society that welds individual freedom with the collective good. What remains to be seen – something that merits a research paper of its

own, perhaps – is whether Castells' underlying democratic theory has been as successful in the so called real world as his books have been in the so called academic world.

CHAPTER 4

Active Citizenship for Social Equality in Benkler's Networked Democracy

In the previous two chapters, I argued that Bell and Castells developed a theoretical middle ground that allows them to reconcile the contradictory demands of liberalism and republicanism. Bell positions at the heart of his postindustrial society the other-oriented individual, an ideal citizen who willfully internalizes the need for social equality by shifting psychological awareness towards others. Castells constructs his own middle ground in what he describes as the social movement, a social collective that emerges out of – and is maintained by – the conscious participation of individual citizens.

While they construct such a middle ground, both scholars oscillate uneasily between the two principles, exactly because they are so difficult to unite. Typically, that is, liberalism privileges individual freedom at the expense of social cohesion, while republicanism promotes the opposite, as it restricts individual freedom when it may harm social cohesion. In the end of the day, and as much as they attempt to reconcile the two, it is clear that Bell's other-oriented individual falls closer to the liberal side, while Castells' social movement closer to the republican side.

Yochai Benkler seems to be on the other hand quite at ease with the cohabitation of these two principles in his theory of the information society. In fact, in Benkler's view they coexist not as conflicting forces, but linearly: an improvement in one is expected to lead to an increase in the other. Indeed, such a relationship between usually contradicting principles of liberal freedom and republican social cohesion, one could argue, makes Benkler's work appear double-faced. At times his approach sounds extremely liberal,

even neoliberal; at other times his narrative is intensely republican, even socialistic. This paradox is indeed reflected in contradicing interpretations of his work. For example, Tiziana Terranova (2009) associates Benkler with the neoliberal tradition, suggesting that his work provides a "refinement" of "liberal and neoliberal economics" (p. 251) (see also: Berry, 2008). Smith (2012) on the other hand finds in Benkler's arguments "a close family resemblance to the familiar vision of socialism" (p. 160). Similarly, the founding executive director of *Wired* magazine, Kevin Kelly (2009), includes Benkler among a list of scholars who advocate for a "digital socialism" that embraces a "spectrum of attitudes, techniques, and tools that promote collaboration, sharing, aggregation, coordination, ad hocracy, and a host of other newly enabled types of social cooperation" (para 8).

My aim in this chapter is to explain how Benkler combines liberalism and republicanism, and to situate his work within the broader lineage of information society scholarship. Yochai Benkler's work is crucial for the explication of mainstream theories of the information society as he has been the intellectual leader of a group of influential scholars who, in the early years of the new century, collectively shaped what Kreiss, Finn, and Turner (2011) described as the "consensus" view about the political role of the Internet in society. This group includes scholars such as Lawrence Lessig, Clay Shirky, and Henry Jenkins, among others.

In this chapter I focus on Yochai Benkler not only because he is recognized by others in his group as an influential scholar (eg.: see Lessig, 2002, p. 23), but also because his work is the most closely related, and is in part founded upon, the theories of the two other scholars central to this dissertation – Manuel Castells and Daniel Bell. Benkler's crowning achievement – his book *The Wealth of Networks* published in 2006 –

and also his earlier work within the field of "commons-based peer production" (Benkler, 2002, p. 375), has become part and parcel of mainstream arguments about the rise of the information society. Through an analysis of Benkler's work on peer production, and particularly but not exclusively a close reading of his magnum opus, I add here the third and final explanatory piece of the story I tell in this dissertation – a story that traces the evolution of democratic ideals of mainstream theories of the information society.

As I suggest in this chapter, Benkler's narrative is situated on the foundations of a cohabitation between liberalism and strong versions of republicanism, between individual freedom and visions of the common good as a form of social equality. Benkler's ease with the combination of such principles stems from his argument that the Internet propagates exponentially, and makes central, a part of society that was previously untouched by industrial modes of economic production – the space of social relations in which the creation of knowledge, culture, and information goods is freely constructed by equal participants. The Internet makes social relations economically meaningful, Benkler proclaims; social relations become the new area of economic production that now emerges alongside the two traditional systems of production that dominated the industrial era, markets and hierarchical organizations.

This chapter is about the ideological narrative that supports Benkler's argument. It is about the democratic claims that he presents, and particularly about the image of a democratic society that he paints in which the left's egalitarianism appears to seamlessly coexist with liberalism's focus on individual freedom. What's more, Benkler's view of Internet-based social relations, as I argue in this chapter, weld liberal individualism with republican egalitarianism in a very particular manner: Within that realm, individual

freedom is equated with the expression of the private self; it is synonymous with a form of expression as a "playful, emotionally and intellectually satisfying form of collaboration" (p. 117), to creatively borrow a phrase from media scholar Fred Turner (2006), that is expected to lead to the construction of a community that embraces a strong republican view of the common good understood as a structure of egalitarian social relations. Freedom of expression represents in Benkler's world the expression of an internally emergent, playful, and private affect, and this he expects will lead, spontaneously through the support of networked technologies, to a more decentralized and egalitarian social structure.

To show how Benkler's narrative justifies this process from private expression to egalitarian political structure, I pick up the thread of ideas that are present in his work on social relations – what he (2002; 2006) describes as the realm of "social production" or "commons-based peer production" – and explain in turn how his views are rooted in a school of thought that has been highly influential in legal academic circles, and which includes three Nobel laureates: New Institutional Economics (NIE)[15]. My purpose in the pages below is not to examine the history of NIE[16], but rather to indicate how a particular set of ideas inside NIE – mainly an approach to the concept of the commons as a democratic alternative beyond markets or hierarchical state – has provided the foundations of Benkler's reasoning in relation to the democratic role of the Internet. The

[15] While perhaps applicable in slightly different social situations, at their core terms such as social production and commons-based peer production encapsulate the same political vision: A society in which individual freedom seamlessly coexists within a robust, if not always perfect, framework of peer-to-peer egalitarian collaboration. In this chapter I tend to use the word commons as a shorthand for both concepts. I do so not merely because these concepts are identical in terms of the political ideals they embrace, but also because the concept of the commons is central to the school of New Institutional Economics (Ostrom, 1990; Ellickson, 1991), the ideas of which Benkler borrows, as I show in this chapter, in order to develop his vision of democracy in the age of information.

[16] For that see, for example: Coase, (1998), Langlois, (1986); Medema, (1997).

contribution of this chapter to academic scholarship is thus twofold: On the one hand, it shows how Benkler's work is pegged on prior work by scholars in NIE – a link that Benkler rarely acknowledges. Second, and more importantly, this chapter brings to light the political philosophy that operates in Benkler's work but also, and by association, in the background of this tradition of thought overall.

I explore Benkler's attachment to NIE in Part I of this chapter. The intellectual trajectory of NIE towards the construction of a concept of the commons begins about eighty years before Benkler's work, with Ronald Coase's (1937) argument about the necessary dichotomy between markets and hierarchies. Although Coase did not talk about the commons per se, his approach solidified what is today considered commonplace thinking in American legal theory: the idea that the coordination of economic production is achieved either through a market system or through a hierarchical organization such as a firm or the government. Then in the same vein, comes Garett Hardin's (1968) claim, which merely reinforces Coase's view, and which suggests that life outside of this dichotomy – a life in the commons – can only end in "tragedy." The story of the commons culminates in the mid-eighties and early nineties with the work of Elinor Ostrom (1990; 1999; 2000) and Robert Ellickson (1986; 1991), who successfully challenged Coase and Hardin. These scholars are cited in a variety of Benkler's articles and books, and their ideas and work has also appeared in what Kreiss, Finn, and Turner (2011) have described as the group of commons peer production scholars (p. 244) such as Lawrence Lessig (2002; 2008), Clay Shirky (2008), and Henry Jenkins (2006).

Then, in Part II, I perform a close reading of Benkler's *Wealth of Networks* – a canonical work that already occupies a coveted spot in the history of information society

scholarship. In both parts of this chapter, I peg my analysis around three key threads that repeat in most of Benkler's work – both his early articles (eg.: 1999, 2002) and his magnum opus – which in turn help me uncover the underlying political ideals that inform his views. All the threads are interlinked, as one builds off the other, together constructing an image of a rising information society of collaborative peer-like communities of freely participating individuals.

More specifically, the three threads that operate across Benkler's work are, first, the argument that human identity is diversely motivated rather than solely self-interested; this is an axiom in classical economics that NIE scholars challenged, and which Benkler adopted and in part adapted in his work. In the first part of this chapter, I sketch the arc between Benkler's early work, which is rooted in the arguments about human diversity of interest as provided by Ostrom and Ellickson. In the remaining section of this first part, I explain how Benkler modifies, later in his career, Ostrom's and Ellickson's views by reducing the importance of self-interest in his construction of the ideal individual. Benkler favors instead a concept of selfhood as an active persona that is always willing to share and to volunteer personal time to promote social causes. This allows Benkler to paint overall an image of a collaborative and participatory digital democratic culture. I trace this second, and more reductive view of democratic identity, to Benkler's reliance on organizational psychologists such as Deci and Ryan (1985), and economist of "happiness" Bruno Frey (1997).

The second thread that runs across this chapter has to do with Benkler's suggested mechanism that transforms freedom to social equality. Benkler argues that an egalitarian social order emerges spontaneously in the commons, just like social norms emerge

naturally and without the external regulation of either markets or hierarchies in the tightly knit communities that Ostrom and Ellickson studied in the eighties and early nineties. While not entirely identical, the ideas and ideals in the work of these two latter scholars clearly set the intellectual stage for Benkler's argument about a social order that emerges naturally, out of the expression of individual free will. There are clear parallels here with the liberal pluralist model of democracy – which I discuss in chapter one – that imagines that social coordination appears naturally, as if from an invisible hand, through the mere aggregation of individual expressions. The difference between the liberal pluralist model and Benkler's approach is that for Benkler individuals do not express self-interest, but rather an interest in sharing and collaborating with others.

The third and final thread that runs across this chapter pertains to the image of equality that informs the ideological background of Benkler's commons. Founding once more his argument on the line of thought established by Ostrom and Ellickson, Benkler describes the commons as a decentralized space of social interaction – a space in which collaboration and the production of cultural goods takes place between peers. Baked in this image of society is a vision of equality not merely of opportunity but rather of result. Benkler, in other words, embraces a strong version of equality as many classic republican theorists would have it: The new social realm of the commons is a relatively egalitarian structure because it is "decentralized" (2002, p. 375); because it links a wide variety of individuals and social groups within a leveled network of communicational relationships – a network that is flatter, at least, than the hierarchical structures of social organization that dominated the industrial society. The difference with a classic republican approach is, of course, that Benkler presumes that an equality of result – a flatter distribution –

results not from setting boundaries on individual freedom, but rather by unleashing individual expression in the digital commons.

In the final part of this chapter I analyze Benkler's concept of the "networked public sphere" (p. 140) in order to expose and critique the problematic co-existence of republican equality and liberal individual freedom in his work. The networked public sphere is Benkler's nod to Habermas' classic theory of the public sphere; it represents Benkler's reasoning about the ways in which the rise of a commons-based peer production positively disrupts and reorganizes the industrial realm of mass-mediated communication. Contrary to Benkler's claims, however, I argue that the model of the networked public sphere deviates significantly from Habermas' theoretical foundations. In Benkler's networked public sphere social equality develops as the seamless result of a laissez faire aggregation of private individual expression. On the contrary, while Habermas' model does not deny the significance of individual expression, it also circumscribes its extent vis à vis competing republican requirements for social equality. If not entirely and always orthogonal to each other, freedom and social equality are never as seamlessly achievable in concert for Habermas; Benkler on the other hand uncritically presumes their peaceful coexistence, which leads him in turn to produce a theory of underlying democratic ideals that view individual freedom as one of the requirements, and as one of the core elements of, a more equal social environment.

I begin my investigation of these matters below with an introduction of Benkler's early work and key partnerships with Internet theorists such as Lawrence Lessig. Then I visit the relationships between NIE and Benkler, and finally I delve into Benkler's

magnum opus, which in many ways brings together, and further develops, some of the most influential ideas in his career until today.

PART I

Benkler & Co.: Active Citizenship and Self-Regulation in the Digital Commons

Yochai Benkler: The Leader of the Cyber-Scholars

Yochai Benkler is a prolific scholar, but he does not seem to enjoy talking about himself. My extensive investigation for biographical information, personal interviews and the like, yielded scant results. What we are left to know about Benkler's academic life is prescribed in a few brief biographical sketches found on his personal website, and from re-circulations of such information from others who cite his work. More or less, what Yochai Benkler wants us to know about his life is this: He was born and raised in Israel and received his undergraduate law degree at the University of Tel Aviv in 1991. Benkler then continued his education at Harvard where he earned his JD by 1994, and he eventually become a professor of law, first at New York University from 1993 to 2003, then at Yale up until 2007 and finally – and as of this writing – at Harvard.

Such relative biographical paucity does not mean that there are no sources from which to elicit a culturally informed reading of the democratic ideals embedded in his writings. It simply means that the investigation needs to begin elsewhere, rather than with a deep dive into his academic life and trajectory, as I did in my analysis of the scholars in the two previous two chapters. What we know with certainty about Yochai Benkler, and where I begin my investigation in this chapter thus, is that he has been closely aligned

with – in fact considered by some (Ananny, 2013; Kreiss, Finn, and Turner, 2011) as the intellectual leader of – a group of scholars who shaped much of the early legal, economic, and cultural thinking about the role of information in society. This group of scholars prominently includes thinkers such as Lawrence Lessig, Henry Jenkins, and Clay Shirky among others.

Writing mainly during the early 2000s, a time of tremendous Internet growth, these scholars proclaimed that we were gradually becoming participants in the making of our own culture – a most democratic of images. No longer would citizens be passive consumers of the goods produced by the culture industry; armed with digital tools and an Internet connection, they would become "active, emotionally engaged, and socially networked" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 20) individuals who claimed a right in the co-creation of culture. As Kreiss, Finn, and Turner (2011) note in their critical review, these scholars saw in the rise of participatory culture the amalgamation of at least two elements: the integration of "psychologically gratifying labor" into a major component of the workplace, which produced in turn a more level "social playing field" (p. 244) of cultural production, and also a more "egalitarian and efficient means of producing information goods" (p. 244). These two elements, as I discuss in this chapter, pertain to the major political thread in Benkler's work over-time that combines the notion of private individual expression with claims about an egalitarian social structure.

At the center of this scholarship about the rise of a participatory society lies the relationship between Yochai Benkler and another legal cyberscholar, Lawrence Lessig. The two have maintained a close friendship over the years, and have also been academic colleagues and collaborators, and have together offered a coherent argument about the

very nature of the Internet in society as a space that successfully welds ideals of individual freedom and social equality. While they began their careers in different institutions – Lessig was first at the University of Chicago and Benkler at NYU, they soon began to attend the same conferences (Levine, 2002), and over the years developed an intellectual admiration for each other. As Lessig (2002) stated, Benkler's theories have been central to his own understanding of "how communications systems function" (p. 23), and in particular in helping him explicate an "obscure" term such as the "commons" (p. 23). Benkler, Lessig also proclaimed, has been "perhaps the best communications theorist of our generation" (p. 23). Similarly, Benkler (2006) observed about his relationship to Lessig that: "I met Larry Lessig for (almost) the first time in 1998. By the end of a two-hour conversation, we had formed a friendship and intellectual conversation that has been central to my work ever since" (p. x).

In fact, it was that same year, in 1998, when Benkler and Lessig would co-author a brief article in the *New Republic*, making a joint statement about the ways in which the Internet radically changes the landscape of mass communication. This article encapsulates the kernel of an argument that would follow them in their individual understanding of the social role of the Internet for the years to come – an argument that is most clearly evident in Benkler's later work *The Wealth of Networks*.

In their *New Republic* piece, Benkler and Lessig argue that we should rethink Coase's reasoning that dominated up to that time the approach to the allocation of radio and television spectra. The major thrust of Coase's argument, as I have discussed above and touch upon again below, suggests that there are only two ways that a scarce public resource should be allocated: either through a managerial decision by a hierarchy such as

the government, or by letting the market decide. The eventual conclusion of Coase's "theorem" as it was called, was to always let the market decide; or as Lessig and Benkler observe, Coase's view "suggested privatizing" the airwaves by having the government auction them to the highest private bidder.

As the authors propose, the Coasean theorem should be only applied in the industrial era – a bygone era more or less they seem to believe – in which the scarcity of public airwaves for communication meant that someone, either market or governments, would need to intervene to efficiently allocate that resource. The "traditional rationale" for radio airwave allocation, they note, would be "something like this: 98.6 is part of the radio spectrum; radio spectrum by its 'nature' needs to be allocated for it to be usable. Two transmitters can't use the same channel, so someone must decide who gets which" (p. 14).

The natural scarcity of the spectrum creates, they observe, a power play over who has a right to control the pipes of mass communication. Those who eventually own the airwaves, whether governments or private companies, can and probably will impose restrictions on the diversity of voices made available in the mass mediated pubic sphere, the authors argue. The Internet on the other hand is not a scarce communication space: It is "no longer true that spectrum" has to be allocated, Lessig and Benkler proclaim; rather, the spectrum can now "be shared by all rather than set aside, for a narrow class of licensees" (p. 14). The "implications of this change are profound," they suggest, because a lack of scarcity means that corporations or governments no longer have to fight over who has access to public communication.

Benkler and Lessig advocate thus that the Internet allows us to move beyond the market-state dichotomy that Coase established. The Internet allows societies to enjoy "individual freedom and the ability to communicate," and to construct a public communication realm – what Benkler later described as a networked public sphere – that looks a lot less like the "*The New York Times*" and more so like a widely spread "jumble of small printers and pamphleteers" (p. 14). Overcoming the market and state dichotomy, as I show below, is a central argument in Benkler work over the years. His imagination about how this takes place, and how it can be justified empirically and philosophically, is rooted in the lineage of scholars who also extended and challenged Coase's work such as Elinor Ostrom and Robert Ellickson[17].

Grounding the Politics of the Commons in New Institutional Economics

Benkler's Penguin: The Digital Commons is Here to Stay

In what is perhaps his most influential scholarly article titled "Coase's Penguin, or, Linux and the Nature of the Firm," Yochai Benkler (2002) extends the line of argument he articulated with Lawrence Lessig in their *New Republic* piece. The communities of collaboration that rapidly appeared on the Internet at the time of his writing, Benkler notes, offer ample empirical evidence that indicate the rise of a new

[17] This chapter is about Benkler, but some of the core connections between Benkler and New Institutional Economics would apply to Lessig as well. Lessig too has relied upon views developed by Ostrom and Ellickson. For example, see Lessig's (2001) relation to Ostrom in his *Future of Ideas* (p. 95), and Lessig's even stronger connection to Ellickson evident in Lessig's 1995 article "The New Chicago School." Additionally, a connection to Lessig (2008) and NIE appears in Lessig's classic book *Remix Culture*, where Lessig argues that the rise of the Internet promulgates the emergence of a more diverse and other-oriented individualism that supports, in turn, broader collaboration – what he describes as a shift from "me-regarding" to "thee-regarding" (p. 151) motivational structures.

global realm of commons-based peer production, one that emerges beyond markets or hierarchies. As Benkler declares at the time: "At the heart of the economic engine of the world's most advanced economies, …we are beginning to take notice of a hardy, persistent, and quite amazing phenomenon." A "new model of production has taken root," he observes, "one that should not be there, at least according to our most widely held beliefs about economic behavior" (p. 371) – especially Coase's beliefs and those of other "institutional economists who studied the relationship between markets and managerial hierarchies as models of organizing production" (p. 372).

What we thought up until this watershed moment, Benkler suggests, was that any attempt to organize social life outside these two spheres would lead to what Garrett Hardin (1968) famously predicted as a tragedy of the commons. Hardin's narrative about the commons, which Benkler (2002) "purposefully" (p. 378) invokes as an antithesis to his own work, embraces more or less a Hobbesian outlook to the world: Whenever we want as a society to allocate a public resource, we will be required to limit individual freedom, we will need to create some sort of Leviathan, because otherwise individuals set free, always self-interested, will compete and grab whatever they can from the common resources until they are eventually depleted. "Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all" (p. 1244), Hardin (1968) concludes.

Using the free and open source community as an exemplary of how the very nature of collaboration operates in the Internet commons, Benkler (2002) argues that "the emergence of free software…poses a puzzle for this organization theory" (p. 372).

Software of industrial caliber, perhaps even better in many occasions, was at the time being made available to all, created freely by global collaborative programmer communities. Why is it that these programmers came together and decided to create and to freely give away a product that required many work hours to produce? These "programmers," Benkler observes, do not "participate in a project because someone who is their boss instructed them," as a firm or state hierarchies would. Neither do they participate "because someone offers them a price," as a marketplace structure would. Instead, "the critical mass of participation in [such] projects cannot be explained by the direct presence of a command, a price, or even a future monetary return" (p. 372-373), Benkler proclaims.

These programmers come together, instead, for the virtue of being able to share with each other, and with the world, their collaborative creation, reveling in their ability to gift away their own time and hard work in exchange for uncertain non-monetary returns such as reputation within a particular community of workers. This model of cultural good production, which Benkler sees emerging all across the Internet, is proof enough of the permanent rise of a third space of cultural production that escapes the control of either markets or hierarchies. Because of these developments, Benkler suggests, we also need to reconsider the main assumptions that led us to believe that communities of commons can only fail.

There are two main objections in the line of thought that denies the possibility of a sustainable commons, as Benkler (2002) observes in his article. The first objection is that humans are not motivated enough to freely contribute to the commons. To put it a little differently, this pertains to what economists describe as the free-rider problem, the

idea that individuals will use public resources without offering anything in return and that "no one will invest in a project if they cannot appropriate its benefits" (Benkler, 2002, p. 378). The second objection relates to the problem of "coordination" in the commons, Benkler suggests. The objection is that "no one" has a central "power to organize collaboration" (p. 378) and that, as such, the commons lack the necessary organizational efficiency that is otherwise delivered by either markets or hierarchies. Benkler offers answers to both objections, which in turn reveal his beliefs about the relationship between freedom and equality in the commons. To unearth the roots of those beliefs, I turn now directly to the theory of New Institutional Economics, mainly as it is constituted in the pioneering work of political scientist and Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom and legal scholar Robert Ellickson.

The Role of Elinor Ostrom and Robert Ellickson in Benkler's Narrative

Yochai Benkler borrows from the theories of New Institutional Economics, mainly Ellickson and Ostrom, in order develop a rationale that helps successfully overcome the two problems of the commons – narrow human motivation and a lack of social coordination. As Benkler (2002) reminds us, indeed quite sparingly for a scholarly tradition so central to his thought, his view of the commons constitutes an expansion of the "literature on some successful commons and common property regimes" (p. 378) in which "Elinor Ostrom's" work stands out as the most "extensive consideration of commons and the resolution of the collective action problems they pose" (p. 378). Ellickson too comes up in Benkler's work, mainly through his contributions to norm-building theory. As Benkler (2002) notes, Ellickson's (1991) book *Order Without Law* served as one of his guiding intellectual lights because of its "particular focus on social

norms rather than on formal regulation as central to the sustainability of common resource pool management solutions that are not based on property" (p. 437).

In fact, these two scholars – Ostrom and Ellickson – have not only influenced Benkler but also a whole branch of legal theorists interested in the study information property rights. As prominent legal scholar Carol Rose (2011) observed, Ostrom's book *Governing the Commons* has been crucial to "legal scholars" because "in its many examples" they "found" two things: First, "a strong source of support for the proposition that people can cooperate to overcome common pool resource issues," and second, a sustained argument about how the commons can operate efficiently through "informal norms rather than either individual property or coercive government" (p. 28).

Robert Ellickson's work on how informal norms replace hierarchies or markets in conditions of common-pool resource management has also been central to legal scholars in Benkler's generation. As Kahan (1997) notes, for example, the "emergence of interest in social norms in the legal academy can be traced to Ellickson" (as cited in Tushnet, 1998, p. 580). In the same vein, Picker (1997) also suggests that "the recent interest in norms and law almost certainly dates from Bob Ellickson's important work" (as cited in Tushnet, 1998 p. 580).

Both Ostrom and Ellickson were original thinkers who wrote on a variety of issues, but whose arguments about the commons are almost identical. As Rose (2011) notes, while Ellickson's approach initially developed outside Ostrom's theoretical context, the parallels between Ellickson and Ostrom are abundant, especially when it comes to Ellickson's argument about the "importance of informal norms to rein in free riding," as well as the centrality in his work of the role of "informal monitoring and

enforcement" (p. 31). It is thus "not surprising," Rose suggests, that Ellickson "soon read and cited" (p. 31) Ostrom's groundbreaking book.

Such a convergence on a particular view of the commons as a social space of efficient production can be summarized in the following three major points, which are all relevant and help further explain Benkler's political ideals. First, both Ellickson and Ostrom showed that the commons are social spaces that operate efficiently outside the constraints of either markets or hierarchies. Second, they argued that human identity as it is performed in the commons is diverse, challenging thus the classic economic model of individual identity as narrowly self-interested. Third, Ellickson and Ostrom both observed that social order in the commons arises spontaneously and that it can be, in many but not all instances, relatively egalitarian in its nature. Taken together, these two scholars developed the intellectual edifice upon which Benkler situated his conception of the digital commons as a space where individual freedom, through a process of organic emergence of informal norms and procedures, leads to a society that is significantly more egalitarian than either markets or hierarchies. In the pages below, I visit the theories of Ostrom and Ellickson in relation to each one of these points and then I connect those to textual evidence in Benkler's early work, mainly to his most relevant and popular article "Coase's Penguin, or, Linux and the Nature of the Firm" that was published in 2002, just a few years before the publication of his magnum opus in 2006.

Ostrom and Ellickson's Human Motivation Thesis: From Self-Interest to Diverse Interest

In her pioneering work on the commons Elinor Ostrom (1990) argues that a publicly held resource can be efficiently managed without supervision by the state or

coordination through the market. Ostrom bases her argument on a long list of empirical research projects, offering a robust set of evidence about the ways in which local communities are able, in various places of the world, to efficiently "self-govern" and "self-organize" their "Common Pool Resources" (pp. 30-33). In Ostrom's case, the empirical cases are physical resources that are located within and across neighboring communities. They are not Benkler's digital commons, that is, but are rather natural resources such as meadows or forests that cross national lines, shared irrigation systems or commonly held fisheries, and so on. But the principle logic that sustains Ostrom's theory of commons management closely parallels Benkler's view of the digital commons.

One of the core elements Ostrom identifies is that human nature is diversely motivatated, and this an approach that directly opposes the standard homo economicus model of classic economics that understands identity as primarily narrowly self-interested and utility maximizing. For Ostrom, the idea of diverse human motivation does not deny the presence of self-interest, but rather embraces the potential that individuals may also at times engage in behaviors that aim to benefit the community and do not necessarily maximize self-interest.

As Ostrom (2009) eloquently summarizes in her Nobel lecture titled "Beyond Markets and States," the "earlier" approaches to identity and behavior in classical economics – such as those exemplified by Hardin for example – presumed that the world operates as a "simple system" where the problem of coordination is to be solved primarily in two ways: on the one hand, she notes, the "optimal institution for the production and exchange of private goods" (p. 409) has been the market. In the case of "nonprivate goods, on the other hand," she observes, "one needs the government to

impose rules and taxes to force self-interested individuals to contribute necessary resources and refrain from self-seeking activities" (p. 409).

This approach presumes, Ostrom suggests, a very simplistic construction of human identity as merely self-interested. It eschews thus the possibility of socially oriented individuals who can collaborate in spite of their self-interested tendencies. This "model of the individual," Ostrom (2009) notes, assumes that "all individuals are fully rational" (p. 409), and while it has "fruitfully generated useful and empirically validated predictions about the results of exchange transactions related to goods with specific attributes in a competitive market," it is not sufficient towards the understanding of social behavior in a "diversity of social dilemmas" (p. 410). In contrast, what Ostrom finds in her work, is the strong presence of a diverse set of motivations that govern individual behavior. Especially in cases of collective action, the bread and butter of her empirical research, human motivations other than narrow self-interest tend to kick in: "A central finding" of her research, she argues, "is that the world contains multiple types of individuals, some more willing than others to initiate reciprocity to achieve the benefits of collective action" (Ostrom, 2000, p. 138). The "humans that we study," Ostrom (2009) notes, "have complex motivational structures and establish diverse private-for-profit, governmental, and community institutional arrangements that operate at multiple scales" and which are capable of "productive and innovative as well as destructive and perverse outcomes" (p. 408).

Ostrom does not deny the importance of self-interest as a motivating factor of economic life. But she presents us, however, with a richer and more realistic theory of human motivation – one that meaningfully embraces a view of individuals as capable of

acting in socially supportive ways that may be contrary to the maximization of self-interest. From this viewpoint, it is easier to see how people may decide to share and limit their use of common pool resources, rather than overuse them, as Hardin's apocalyptic approach predicted.

Another scholar within the tradition of rational self-interest who Ostrom criticizes is Mancur Olson (1965), whose influential work garnered the sharp critique of another central scholar in this dissertation – Manuel Castells. What Olson predicts, Ostrom critiques, was that it is difficult to get "individuals to pursue their joint welfare, as contrasted by individual welfare" (p. 6), exactly because of the limited returns that doing so entails. This classic "free rider problem," Ostrom argues, presumes problematically that "whenever a person cannot be excluded from the benefits that others provide, each person is motivated not to contribute to this joint effort, but to free ride on the efforts of others" (p. 6).

What Olson suggests instead, and what Benkler also argues as I show more extensively below, is that one of the critiques of the possibility for collective action – the lack of an altruistic tendency in human motivation – is not empirically true. What we need to do, these scholars suggest, is to rethink the mental models that guide theories of how collective action works. This requires moving away from a view of the individual as merely rational and self-interested, and closer to a more complex understanding of the person as a diversely interested and also socially oriented entity. To be sure, this approach conjures images of another post-industrial scholar central to this dissertation, Daniel Bell, whose view of the ideal citizen is similarly located around the belief that citizens can be other-oriented rather than narrowly self-interested.

Although not having as deeply influenced Benkler's work in terms of human motivation theory, it is worth noting here that Robert Ellickson's approach is in line with Ostrom's. Ellickson (1998) too, credits the concept of diverse motivation as one of the critical differences between old-school economic theories and more recent psychologically informed explanations about the human capacity to share, collaborate, and limit self-interest for the benefit of the community. Classic economists, he suggests, "assume self-interested behavior" as the basis of individual action and, extrapolating that to the collective, have found extreme "difficulty explaining why individuals give" (p. 540) to public endeavors and why they may at times contribute to society without the expectation of a tangible return. Economic theory cannot explain, Ellickson argues, the presence of endeavors for the common good such as the "public radio," or similarly why people "control their littering, leave tips at roadside restaurants, return items to a lost-and-found, and otherwise cooperate when a rational, unsocialized person would not" (p. 541).

Similarly, as Benkler (2002) argues, the citizen of the digital commons seeks rewards that tend to fall outside the realm of self-interest. Sure, at times people look to maximize personal wealth, but there are also times – like those that Benkler observes in the digital commons – when people engage instead in "gift-exchange" and a collaborative "reciprocity" (p. 373) towards the community. In this sense, at the center of Benkler's model stands an argument with an Ostromian ring to it: "Diverse motivations," as Benkler (2002) observes, "animate human beings, and, more importantly, …there exist ranges of human experience in which the presence of monetary rewards is inversely related to the presence of other, social-psychological rewards" (p. 378).

This is how Benkler imagines his ideal individual citizen in the commons in his early work. As I show below, in part II of this chapter, such an approach sits at the foundation of Benkler's theory of the commons. To be sure, what is also evident in his magnum opus *The Wealth of Networks*, is that Benkler's view of the individual swings further towards the altruistic side of the pendulum. Instead of seeing individuals as diversely motivated – as able to equally embrace both self- and other- interested behaviors – Benkler veers closer to a view of individual motivation primarily as a form of active participation and selfless collaboration. As a result, Benkler minimizes the self-interested elements of individual behavior.

Beyond the issues of human motivation, however, Benkler also identifies in his article a second objection with regard to the possibility of an efficient commons – that of social coordination. How can the commons operate efficiently on a large scale? How can individuals coordinate their production of goods – especially information goods – in the absence of either of the time-tested mechanisms of social coordination, markets or hierarchies? The answer to that question, as Ostrom and Ellickson suggest – and as Benkler further develops in his articles and his *Wealth of Networks* – is through the development of informal social norms that emerge out of the long-term processes of human communication.

Norms emerge organically, they bubble up as the result of the natural progress of human relations over time; they are not – at least for Ostrom, Ellickson, and Benkler – induced or sustained by external social structures such as governments, laws, or marketplaces. They operate rather as a kind of communicative infrastructure that sustains economic and cultural production within a community.

What's more, these communities do not only emerge freely but are also expected to be egalitarian in their operation – at least significantly more egalitarian, that is, than the alternatives offered by either hierarchical governments or markets. Ostrom, Ellickson, and Benkler describe this rising egalitarian society as "decentralized," connoting to a social geography in which power is widely distributed, and devoid of any particular center of authority. Each individual or social group occupying a node inside the decentralized network relates to others through informal norms, that is, rather than through demands imposed by a state or a market. Because of this decentralized and flat social geography, these scholars assume, each node has a relatively equal share of social power – a rather equal capacity to influence the communicative flows that shape, in turn, the overall distribution of power in society. In the pages below, I discuss Ellickson's and Ostrom's views on the key factors that support the emergence of such a decentralized social structure and show, additionally, how their work informs Benkler's narrative about the rise of a digital commons.

Ostrom's and Ellickson's Egalitarianism: Spontaneous Social Order and Decentralization

Just because common pool resource management takes place outside markets or hierarchies, this does not mean that it takes place in a vacuum of governing rules and procedures. Rather than market prices, legal regulations, or managerial commands, the commons are governed through the development of social norms that are internally maintained and negotiated. As Ostrom (2000) argues, the commons are governed through the individuals' "internalization of social norms," which are "shared understandings about actions that are obligatory, permitted, or forbidden" (pp. 143-144).

For Ostrom, the success of the commons depends on the capacity of each and every person to self-govern, to restrict self-interest, and to rely instead on the cultural edifice of social norms – flexible social agreements that emerge out of established rituals, accepted behaviors, and shared beliefs. One of the main mechanisms that facilitates the public's participation in the construction and maintenance of social norms is, for Ostrom, the process of communication. Communication allows individuals to become active participants, that is, rather than mere observers of social norms. Communication is the means of access to a commonly held structure of knowledge about norms in a community, and between different communities that operate within the commons. When a commons – a "self-organized resource governance system" – maximizes "communication with other localities," Ostrom (1999) argues, it is more likely to adapt and change rules over time" (p. 525). Communication supports a "trial-and-error process" that allows communities to go through a "rapid feedback" learning process, she observes, with regard to those social norms and "rules that obviously do not work in a particular environment" (p. 525). On the contrary, as Ostrom suggests, "if all self-organized resource governance systems are totally independent," and lacking any "communication among them, then each has to learn through its own-trial-and error process." This condition will lead to communities "taking longer to learn how to manage the commons" and "many will find that rules they have tried do not work. Some will fail entirely" (p. 525), she notes.

In Ostrom's theory, thus, a participatory construction of norms supports the efficient management of commons. For Ostrom, those norms are flexible as they are malleable through the communicative input of community members over time.

Individuals feel a sense of participation – a sense of collective ownership of the commons – because they are participants in the construction of social norms that govern those commons. For Ostrom, the development of norms is an internal process. Any disagreements about what norms are, or about how they should be applied, are dealt with internally rather than by appeals to law, markets, or firm hierarchies: "In self-organized field settings," Ostrom observes, "participants rarely impose sanctions on one another that have been devised exogenously. …Sanctions are much more likely to emerge from an endogenous process of [communities] crafting their own rules, including the punishments that should be imposed if these rules are broken" (pp. 505-506).

Participation in the construction of norms is for Ostrom the very reason why the commons can succeed in the long term. And this condition, in turn, makes the commons a system that is more efficient than any other system of governance in which participation is controlled from the outside. As Ostrom (2000) suggests, "when users of a common-pool resource organize themselves to devise and enforce some of their own basic rules, they tend to manage local resources more sustainably than when rules are externally imposed on them" (p. 148) – external, that is, meaning the rules enforced by governments through laws, by markets through monetary rewards, or by managerial commands as they are dispensed within hierarchically organized firms. For Ostrom, norm-based social agreements are freely formed on the other hand, and as such they are founded and maintained on nothing more than the process of communicative participation inside the community.

Similar to Ostrom, Robert Ellickson (1986; 1991) views norms as the central structure that helps manage common pool resources. In his study of communally

managed pastures in Sashta county, California, Ellickson observed farmers and cattle-ranchers settle their disputes informally, as custom and norms would require, rather than through appeals to law or through the establishment of markets. Like Ostrom, Ellickson (1991) stresses that norms belong in the internal rather than external realm of governance (p. 127). Especially in the case of closely-knit social groups, the presence of "informal norms" serves to "maximize the objective welfare of group members" (p. 283), Ellickson suggests. Because of the efficiency of social norms, he argues, "people" will tend to "coordinate to mutual advantage without supervision by the state" (p. 4). And indeed, in his study Ellickson observed multiple occasions where "people" would "supplement, and indeed preempt, the state's rules with rules of their own" (p. 5).

Perhaps even more forcefully than Ostrom, Ellickson (1991) suggests that norms provide a social "order" that "arises spontaneously" (p. 4). He brings up a few interesting examples to drive the point home – one of those examples is the process of language creation: "Millions of people have incrementally helped shape the English language into an enormously ornate and valuable institution" (p. 5), Ellickson observes. This happened, though, without anyone in particular imposing rules or providing incentives that would elicit its growth. Rather, informal communication between people and their institutions naturally led over time to the development of a living, flexible, and ever-expanding language. "Those who have contributed to this achievement," Ellickson proclaims, "have acted without the help of the state or any other hierarchical coordinator. The innovators who coined the words in this sentence, for example, are anonymous" (p. 5).

Similarly to Ostrom, Ellickson is driven to the conclusion that the relationships between individuals – norms that emerge from daily communication processes – operate

as the central connecting thread: "Much of the glue of a society comes not from law enforcement, as the classicists would have it," Ellickson (1991) suggests, "but rather from the informal enforcement of social mores by acquaintances, bystanders, trading partners, and others" (p. 233). In this sense, in every society, and in the commons more particularly, there are "unofficial enforcers," not the state, who "use punishments such as negative gossip and ostracism to discipline malefactors and bounties such as esteem and enhanced trading opportunities to reward the worthy" (p. 541).

But how do norms lead to a distributed social geography? Sure, one may ask, norms emerge from the free will of individuals, but how is this in any way an improvement in terms of social equality? The organic emergence of norms, Ellickson and Ostrom argue – and Benkler also agrees as I discuss below – leads to a social organization that is more decentralized, more "polycentric" as Ostrom (2010) describes it, than hierarchical organizations.

If you allow people to freely share a resource outside markets or hierarchies, Ostrom (1999) suggests, they will self-organize into a decentralized structure "without one dominating central authority" (p. 528). This is in other words a system of governance "where citizens are able to organize not just one but multiple governing authorities at differing scales" (p. 528). A polycentric system distributes power more equally than any hierarchical structure because it delivers power widely, outwards to each and every member of society. "Users of each common-pool resource," as Ostrom observes, "have authority to make at least some of the rules related to the use of that particular resource" (p. 528). Such individuals, that is, do not only enjoy an equal opportunity to access

power, but an actual and direct power over the future course of the commonly managed public resources.

Ellickson (1991) develops a similar logic in his understanding of social norms as naturally leading to a social structure that is more decentralized. The communities he studied in California worked out their differences through the application of norms that were "highly decentralized," he notes, something that means that "no particular individual has special authority to proclaim norms" (p. 130) but that the community, as a whole and through each individual within it, distributes far and wide the responsibility to construct and maintain the norms of governance in the commons.

As I show in the part II of this chapter, Ellickson and Ostrom influenced Benkler's development of the idea of the commons as a space of egalitarian power distribution. Fragments of the idea of decentralization as social architecture that improves individual freedom also appear in Benkler's work at least as early as 1999, in another one of his widely cited papers titled "Free as the Air Common to Use: First Amendment Constraints on Enclosure in the Public Domain." For Benkler (1999), a "concentrated distribution" of "power in society" translates into an "unequal distribution of power to express ideas and engage in public discourse" (p. 378). This concentration, in turn, has "negative effects not only on political discourse – political self-governance – but also on individual self-governance" (p. 381), he notes. A more "decentralized" structure on the other hand – one that Benkler claims to observe emerge in the digital commons – "seeks" to "assure that many and diverse organizations will in fact engage in information production" (p. 398). A wider distribution of social power thus means for Benkler that a larger number of individuals and associations are afforded a greater power to affect

public life and participate in the construction of culture. Like Ostrom and Ellickson before him, Benkler disagrees with the classic political philosophical that situates social equality in competition with individual freedom. Rather, individual freedom leads for Benkler to a flat social geography that ensures, as in a feedback loop, a wide distribution of social power to individual citizens. I further discuss and offer additional evidence for the presence of these conceptual relationships in part II of this chapter, which delves into a close reading of Yochai Benkler's most important contribution to the scholarship of the information society – his book *The Wealth of Networks.*

Part II

A Close Reading of the *Wealth of Networks*: Active Citizenship for Social Equality

Yochai Benkler does not argue that technology creates the new economy, but rather that it facilitates the passage of already existing types of relations – non-monetary social relations – into the productive forefront of the economy. In the new society, he (2006) observes, the "material conditions of production…have changed in ways that increase the relative salience of social sharing and exchange as a modality of economic production" (p. 92). In this sense, "behaviors and motivation patterns familiar to us from social relations," which nevertheless "continue to cohere in their own patterns," have "come to play a substantial role as modes of motivating, informing, and organizing productive behavior at the very core of the information economy" (p. 92). These patterns of behavior – social relations such as sharing with friends and family, or the processes of figuring out how to distribute common resources in small communities like those Ostrom and Ellickson studies – are now economically relevant on a global level. This is what

network technologies offer: the "feasibility of producing information, knowledge, and culture through social, rather than market and proprietary relations" and through "cooperative peer production and coordinated individual action" (p. 92).

What's more, Benkler also suggests that these conditions, which bring communal relations into the forefront of the global economy, are also supported by a new kind of politics. He suggests that this new economy does not merely constitute a different style in economic production but "creates the opportunities for greater autonomous action, a more critical culture, a more discursively engaged and better-informed republic, and perhaps a more equitable global community" (p. 92). In other words, Benkler's political vision of the network society embraces a very particular version of an emerging political life, one that, as I have been suggesting across this chapter and as I discuss extensively below, presumes that individual freedom leads organically to the construction of a more equitable society.

In the following pages I perform a close reading of Benkler's (2006) book *The Wealth of Networks*, digging deeper into the evidence that reveals how Benkler understands individual freedom and social equality, and explaining how he believes that the two are related. Keeping the theories of Ostrom and Ellickson in the background, I first visit Benkler's view of freedom and show how it is founded on an understanding of the ideal citizen as possessing a communicative, playful, almost child-like, personality. In this magnum opus, Benkler reveals that his view of the natural predispositions of the

human state are not merely rooted in diverse motivations, as Ostrom and Ellickson suggest, but are rather aligned with ideas of altruism rather than self-interest[18].

Before I discuss how Benkler understands his other value, equality, I visit the connecting middle ground, which refers to a particular process that Benkler implies can successfully connect the values of individual freedom and social equality. The best way to analyze this process is first by visiting one of Benkler's major and most politically-salient examples: his argument about the rise of a particular kind of commons understood as a networked public sphere, which according to Benkler is an improved version of the industrial era's mass-mediated public sphere. Relying on a loose and, as I discuss in the conclusion of this chapter quite problematic interpretation of Jürgen Habermas' concept of the public sphere, Benkler suggests that the decentralization provided by networked technologies can successfully bridge the gap between freedom and social equality.

Benkler rarely makes this claim in a straightforward manner. But nevertheless, such a political perspective permeates the narrative background of his book. Showing exactly how this takes place is the task of this part of this chapter. For Benkler's theory to hold, one must necessarily imagine the individual citizen as an active and socially oriented individual who knowingly contributes to the commons of the networked public sphere. Once this presumption is in place, then Benkler (2006) is able to argue that a more egalitarian public sphere – a space not unlike academic processes of "peer production," "filtering," and "accreditation" (p. 271) – will spontaneously emerge from the pooling together of individual creative resources.

[18] This is a finding that I do not in any way base on Benkler's (2011) later work on the "unselfish gene" – I have deliberately avoided engaging with Benkler's later works so as not to confound my close reading of the *Wealth of Networks*.

Finally, I discuss Benkler's view of social equality. I stress how the networked public sphere is not merely a space that provides a weak model of equality of opportunity, as liberal theorists would have it, but rather a more robust and republican version of equality of result. The emergence of a networked public sphere, it seems to Benkler, organically leads to a more egalitarian topology – this is, not to a liberal world of greater access to opportunity, but rather to a world of actual improvements in the distribution of power. With this final piece about equality, Benkler's ideological narrative becomes clear in its full force: Unleashing individual creativity, coupled with networked technologies leads, as if by a natural progression or an invisible hand, to a more egalitarian public sphere, and to a more levelled social world.

Taken together, these elements above indicate how the rise of a networked public sphere – a political commons – offers Benkler a way out of the perennial normative problem of political philosophy: A way to combine individual freedom with peaceful, productive, and ideally egalitarian, social coordination. Benkler's way out, it seems, claims the absence of opportunity cost between the two; in his world, we can have both liberal and republican cakes and eat them too.

Benkler is of course not the only one claiming such a virtuous third ground that can escape the pernicious dichotomies between republicanism and liberalism. As Block and Jankovic (2016) note in one of the rare critiques of Ostrom's work, for example, Ostrom successfully welds socialist and liberal ideas. As such, "socialists like [Ostrom's] argument because it seems to show that free markets and private property are not the magical solutions for all economic problems," Block and Jankovic suggest. At the same time, "some free-market-oriented authors do so" as well, they observe, "because" her

theory "seems to support the Hayekian (1945) philosophy of using the local and tacit, spontaneous-order knowledge for social cooperation and coordination, instead of one-size-fits-all government-imposed solutions" (pp. 308-309). On a similar but not identical path, I argue below and overall in this chapter, Benkler welds leftist hopes for social equality and de-commercialization with liberal views that privilege individual freedom outside state intervention – both, he contends, are realized in the space of digital commons.

In the final pages of this chapter, I compare Benkler's understanding of the public sphere with Habermas's theory, especially because Benkler claims that his theory is based at least in part on Habermas'. I show that Benkler's approach differs from Habermas' at least in two crucial ways. This allows me to disentangle, in turn, Benkler's neoliberal imagination from Habermas' robust democratic theory. The core differences between them have to do with: first, the notion that individual freedom is an expression of the private self, which Benkler embraces but Habermas arguably does not and, second, with the presence in Habermas of an institutional foundation for the public sphere, something that is absent in Benkler's approach. Habermas' ideal democratic individuals have empathy for the social other, just like Benkler's do, but their speech in the public sphere is not an emotional brainstorm of private thoughts, as Benkler's approach would suggest. Rather, their participation is formed around facts, logical argumentation, and a sense of other-oriented rational expression. Second, equality in the Habermasian public sphere does not naturally emerge as the result of laissez faire individual expression on a global scale; it is formed instead by the acceptance of a minimum requirement of substantive ethical rules and procedures, which ensure that everyone will have a chance

to speak and to be heard in the public sphere. But first thing's first. I now turn to Benkler's understanding of the self as an internally motivated, playful, and creative social being.

Benkler's Freedom in the Commons

Motivating Action: Alienation versus Desire

One of the foundations of Benkler's commons is encapsulated in the idea that individuals are diversely motivated rather narrowly self-interested. As I showed in Part I of this chapter, Benkler's approach in his early papers is rooted in the theories of Elinor Ostrom and Robert Ellickson. In his book, however, Benkler (2006) reveals a much more constricted understanding of what diverse motivation is – perhaps one that, ironically, denies the very diversity it claims to embrace. The ideal citizen in Benkler's *Wealth of Networks* is internally motivated, playful, with a direct connection and ease in expressing internal desires. These characteristics make participation in the commons appear as the natural extension of individual self-expression.

Benkler refocuses his view of human nature, while not contradicting Ostrom or Ellickson, onto another group of researchers in organizational and business psychology such as Deci and Ryan (1985) and Edward Frey (1997). These scholars make a case for the ideal citizen as a person who is finely attuned to her inner emotional world and whose socially oriented behavior is motivated by the expression of that internal world. The direct line of the self with inner emotions, Benkler suggests, is also tightly linked with a particular mode of allocating production in the commons as a form of sociability and collaboration of private individuals.

In the two classic industrial era systems of economic production, markets and hierarches, motivating human labor is the task of external incentives and is indifferent to private desire. Both systems are efficient in allocating economic production, Benkler (2006) argues, because they offer substantial rewards for giving up one's private time – a time that in the absence of those rewards would be spent on personal interests and pleasures, rather than on labor. In the case of the market, those incentives are usually monetary, Benkler observes, while in the case of hierarchies those take the form of the managerial commands of a superior officer. Taken together, markets and hierarchies are incentive structures that are "imposed on individuals from the outside" and constitute "offers of money for, or prices imposed on, behavior," or otherwise of "threats of punishment or reward from a manager…for complying with, or failing to comply with, specifically prescribed behavior" (p. 94).

Because of the extrinsic nature of rewards in either markets or hierarchies, people experience alienation from their own labor. Work does not spring from one's wants and desires, but from one's needs to either make money in the market, or with the need to comply with hierarchical commands that ensure a salary or other similar rewards. As Benkler (2006) notes, in the "mass industrial production" that is dominated by either markets or hierarchies, workers are "reduced" to "cogs" (p. 137); that is, workers do not find satisfaction in their own labor because their motivation to work is externally motivated by economic rewards, rather than motivated by an internal joy that can be derived from working on something that is personally interesting. The major "cultural, if not intellectual, roots" of this industrial era approach to external incentives for work, Benkler argues, are found in "Fredrick Taylor's *Theory of Scientific Management,*"

which proposes the "idea of abstracting and defining all motions and actions of employees in the production process so that all the knowledge is in the system, while the employees being barely more than its replaceable parts" (p. 137). As I have discussed in previous chapters, this is a view of industrialism – and of the inevitable emotional alienation that it produces – that both Bell and Castells have criticized.

The industrial type of economy that undermines creative spirit and alienates individuals is still central to the modern information societies, Benkler reminds us; it is encapsulated in any kind of economic production still organized by either market or hierarchies. As he suggests: "While the grind of industrial Taylorism seems far from the core of the advanced economies," and while it is mainly "shunted" to "poorer economies, the basic sense of alienation and lack of effective agency persists" (p. 138). The workforce in many places of the world is "thoroughly alienated from the enterprise," this time not by working on the factory floor but rather because it is "trapped in a cubicle" (p. 138).

Standing on the other side of the spectrum of incentive structures is what Benkler believes to be a genuine alternative to worker alienation – the realm of commons-based peer production. The commons is a space of "social production" (pp. 3, 89) in which the "reasons for action...come from within the person," Benkler argues – reasons "such as pleasure or personal satisfaction" (p. 94). To solidify theoretically this point, Benkler turns to the work of Deci and Ryan (1985), as well as Edward Frey (1997).

In their pathbreaking book titled *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*, Deci and Ryan (1985) offer a clear distinction between the nature of external and internal motivation. For these authors, internal motivation refers to an

activity that "a person does in the absence of a contingency or control" (p. 34). Internally motivated action is, in other words, initiated and performed in response to "internal rewards such as interest and mastery" (p. 49). "Extrinsically motivated behavior," on the other hand, "has an external perceived locus of causality: the person does it to get an extrinsic reward or to comply with an external constraint" (p. 49). Those who are internally motivated to do something, either on their own or in collaboration with others, do so because they can derive an internal sense of joy in the process rather than in the external reward offered as a return.

Similarly, in a short article distilling their research, Deci and Ryan (2010) further explain that internal motivation stems from the expression of desire, drawing direct parallels with how children play. Internally motivated people operate like "little children," the authors note, who "love to play and to learn" (p. 869). Children are "active, curious, and eager to engage their environments, and when they do they learn. To some extent adults also love to play and to learn," Deci and Ryan observe. Like children, when adult "people are playing and learning in this eager and willing way, they are intrinsically motivated. Throughout life, when they are in their healthiest states," they argue, "they are active and interested, and the intrinsically motivated behaviors that result help them acquire knowledge about themselves and their world" (p. 869).

Benkler's digital commons taps this kind of internal motivation – the desire for play and exploration that emerges from the innate sense of creativity that people have when they are in touch with their inner child. Drawing once more on the free software community, Benkler (2006) argues that the success of "large free software projects" took place at least in part because those who participated were "acting primarily for social

psychological reasons-because it is fun or cool" (p. 102); not because they had to, or because they were paid. This playfulness – this coolness and fun derived from work – Benkler suggests, is the prime motivation of participation in the commons. It signifies an active engagement, a willingness to collaborate with others, and leads to a condition in which "individuals" are "substantially more engaged participants, both in defining the terms of their productive activity and in defining what they consume and how they consume it" (p. 138). The ideal participant of the commons, that is, prefers to play rather than to labor, to freely engage in psychologically gratifying creations rather than to succumb to externally motivated pressures to produce. The domain of commons "production and consumption" is thus for Benkler a domain where "work and play" are blurred, and a space where their combination enriches "individual autonomy substantively by creating an environment built less around control and more around facilitating action" (p. 139).

In this environment of peer production, individuals contribute by expressing their private emotions. Individuals do not feel pressured to work in the commons, and they thus lack a sense of alienation – they work on whatever project they wish for as long as they wish. They are able to express themselves freely, motivated by internal structures of desire that allow them to "build things that they want to build in the digitally networked environment," and to know "that this pursuit of their will need not, perhaps even cannot, be frustrated by insurmountable cost" from a market "or an alien bureaucracy" (p. 139).

For Benkler (2006), thus, external motivations such as money or managerial commands may in fact corrupt the engagement of one's creative capacities within the commons. External motivations such as money or managerial commands will tend to

"crowd out" (p. 94), he argues, the intrinsic motivations of participants. Basing his argument on business psychologists Edward Frey, Benkler argues that individuals do not always aim to maximize monetary rewards. Rather, there are times and social contexts in which the presence of money will corrupt productive activity. As Frey (1997) notes in one of his most popular works titled *Not Just for The Money*, people indeed "undertake many activities simply because they like them," not because they "expect a monetary gain" (p. ix). In fact, Frey argues, "a higher monetary compensation crowds-out this inner motivation in important circumstances. To offer higher pay then makes people less committed to their work, and may reduce their performance" (p. ix).

Borrowing from Frey's work, Benkler (2006) argues that the presence of extrinsic motivations will tend to " 'crowd out' intrinsic motivations" because those will "impair self-determination" or "impair self-esteem" (p. 94). Consider the example of friendship and the motivations and behaviors that relate to it, Benkler suggests. In such relationships, offering money as a return for one's behavior is inappropriate and diminishes the possibility of future returns from that relationship: "If you leave a fifty-dollar check on the table at the end of a dinner party at a friend's house, you do not increase the probability that you will be invited again" (p. 92), he suggests.

Or consider another example, which Benkler develops more extensively, that helps explain how he imagines the ideal personality in the digital commons. Asking his readers to engage in a thought experiment, Benkler (2006) compares the possibilities of action that "grade-school teacher" (p. 54) would have in the industrial era and in the era of networked information. Let's say, Benkler proposes, that this teacher wants to create a website for Viking ships that he can share with his students for the purpose of improving

their knowledge. What made this teacher's life difficult in the industrial era was not a lack of internal motivation, but rather the inefficiencies inherent in the available modes of production. "Pre-Internet," the teacher "would need to go to one or more libraries and museums, find books with pictures, maps, and text, or take his own photographs (assuming he was permitted by the museums) and write his own texts, combining this research" (p. 54), Benkler argues. What's more, the teacher would also "need to select portions, clear the copyrights to reprint them, find a printing house that would set his text and pictures in a press, pay to print a number of copies, and then distribute them to all children who wanted them" (p. 54). All these costs for "creating even one copy," Benkler suggests, would probably "dissuade the teacher" from engaging in this endeavor to enrich his students' intellectual lives.

But of course, in the age of the Internet research is "simpler and cheaper" (p. 54), as Benkler proclaims. "Now place the teacher with a computer and a high-speed Internet connection, at home or in the school library," he suggests. In this case, "the cost of production and distribution of the products of his effort are trivial," and it becomes easy for the teacher to produce the necessary information and make it "available to anyone in the world," let alone his students, "as long as he is willing to spend some of his free time" on this endeavor "rather than watch television or read a book" (p. 54).

As Benkler presents it, the crux of this matter is enabling individual will rather than asking whether this will exists in the first place. The ideal citizen, in this case the schoolteacher, is for Benkler always already able to offer his extra hours in the service of the community; the question is not, in other words, if this is a reasonable expectation to have of the teacher or the citizen. There are billions of people out there like this

schoolteacher, Benkler argues, who have the will and who now – with the low costs of communication afforded by the Internet – will readily spend some of their free time helping their students learn. As Benkler estimates, at the time of his book's writing there were about a "billion people in advanced economies" who "may have between two billion and six billion spare hours among them, every day." These people, regardless of whether they want to spend just one hour, a day, or months on a project, can volunteer and in the aggregate help produce "what others want to read, see, listen to, or experience" (p. 55), he proclaims.

The political ideal that informs this thought experiment, which is also at the center of Benkler's overall narrative, has to do with the deeply uncritical assumption about the state of mind – and of heart and will – of the ideal individual of the information society. Benkler presumes that this individual, the ideal schoolteacher, has a caring side which he expresses towards his students and who is willing and able to spend his Saturday evening crafting a Viking student booklet. This schoolteacher naturally derives a psychological satisfaction from his ability to express, and to share with others, such innate creativity.

The rising new world of information is for Benkler in this sense a space of willful, playful, collaboration between people who act like ideal school teachers – active citizens who create cultural content with an aim to reap the internal rewards of their participation. These people do not act, that is, because they are externally incentivized by the educational marketplace or because the schoolmaster, standing on the top of the school's hierarchy, asked them to do so. In the era of "cheap ubiquitous Internet access, the breadth and depth of the transformation we are undergoing going begins to become clear" (p. 55), Benkler cheerfully proclaims. People across the world who want to volunteer

their billions of hours, he notes, have "diverse interests – as diverse as human culture itself. Some care about Viking ships, others about the integrity of voting machines. Some care about obscure music bands, others share a passion for baking" (p. 55). The change that the networked era brings about is that it allows citizens to act on and express their already existing internal desires and interests.

This expression of creativity leads in turn to the development of a society of widely distributed power, Benkler argues; to a society that is more egalitarian than the industrial society ever could be. The new economy bristles with an individual "will to create and to communicate with others"; it is built on the general will to engage in "shared cultural experiences" (p. 55) and is derived from the high likelihood "that each of us wants to talk about something that we believe others will also want to talk about." This internal desire to connect is what "makes the billion potential participants in today's online conversation, and the six billion in tomorrow's conversation, affirmatively better than the commercial industrial model" (p. 55), Benkler observes.

Sorting Creativity: From Individual Freedom to Social Equality

Markets and Hierarchies Sort Creativity Inefficiently

At the center of Benkler's model stands the intrinsically motivated individual who engages in collaborative work in ways similar to that of, say, a computer programmer who contributes to a shared software project for reasons that exceed, and are at times contrary to, monetary or other external incentives. But the question that remains yet unanswered, and which I answer in this part of the chapter, is that of coordination at scale. Up until now I have shown how Benkler suggests that in the absence of external

incentives, individuals like the schoolteacher above are sufficiently motivated and able to give away some of their free time towards the completion of a project in the commons. But I have not yet explicitly demonstrated how Benkler argues that this can efficiently take place in the aggregate. How is it that all these billions of volunteers associate with each other in ways that are more efficient than the time-tested systems of markets or hierarchies?

The first move that Benkler does to support his view is to suggest that the commons is better than markets or hierarchies because the latter two cannot efficiently allocate the core commodity of the new economy: "human creativity" (pp. 99, 100). When it comes to the information economy, which is organized around the extraction of value from creative endeavors, neither markets or hierarchies can successfully – or at least as successfully as the commons – maximize the output of creative labor because as Benkler argues the incentives they offer, money or managerial commands, tend to crowd out the presence of internal motivations necessary for the optimal expression of creativity.

As Benkler (2006) notes, the "difference between markets and hierarchical organizations, on the one hand, and peer-production processes based on social relations, on the other, is particularly acute in the context of human creative labor" (p. 110). This labor, as I have shown in the pages above – and as Benkler insists time and again in his book – is "one of the central scarce resources that these systems must allocate in the networked information economy" (p. 110). Markets and hierarchies are crude in their allocation of creativity, Benkler argues; they are not as able to achieve a "crispness" (p. 110), a fine-tuned clarity, in determining the proper rewards to the products that are

produced from innate endeavors such as creativity. "Compared to the high variability of individual ability and motivation levels," Benkler observes, we see that market "pricing" and hierarchical management, "continue to be a function of relatively crude information about the actual variability among people."

To put it a little differently, for Benkler (2006) "both markets and firm hierarchies require significant specification of the object of organization and pricing – in this case, human intellectual input" (p. 112). Within these two realms, it becomes "more and more costly to maintain efficiently" a finely tuned process by which to accurately evaluate and compensate the "aspects of performance that are harder to fully specify in advance or monitor – like creativity over time" (p. 110), he observes. The two main systems of the industrial era, markets and hierarchies, are inefficient at sorting creativity properly, and here is where the role of the decentralized commons comes into play.

Solving for Creativity at Scale: Spontaneous Decentralized Order

The commons allocate creativity within and throughout structures that are "decentralized rather than hierarchically assigned" (p. 62), Benkler observes. As I discuss below, decentralization is crucial to Benkler's claim that the commons is a space that achieves an improved social equality of result. But before I discuss this point, I first explain below how Benkler expects decentralized structures to emerge as a natural progression of individual will aggregation.

While it may engage millions of people at a time, Benkler (2006) insists, the mode of commons-based peer production efficiently sorts information without underperforming in the two main things that markets and hierarchies do especially well: "filtering" cultural content for "relevance" and for "accreditation" (p. 75). Markets,

especially those for cultural goods such as movies, news, or music, filter content by giving people what they want – they achieve thus a great degree of public relevance, Benkler argues. On the other hand, hierarchies represented by managerial actors such as newspaper editors, movie directors, and orchestra conductors, can achieve high levels of accreditation since they operate as filters of information quality that is then delivered to the public. Indeed, not every musical composition should be performed in the city orchestra, nor should every piece of writing be included in a newspaper.

When it comes to the production of cultural goods, the commons can for Benkler perform these two functions as efficiently as markets or hierarchies. Individuals who operate like peers – like millions of creative and collaboratively inclined schoolteachers, to put it differently – help the commons to filter out for both relevance and for accreditation: "What we are seeing on the network," Benkler (2006) proclaims,

> is that filtering for both relevance and accreditation has become the object of widespread practices of mutual pointing, of peer review, of pointing to original sources of claims, and its complement, the social practice that those who have some ability to evaluate the claims in fact do comment on them." (p. 12)

These processes of peer filtering, Benkler observes, are not induced by price incentives or managerial commands, but rather emerge organically whenever the opportunity is offered to those individuals – when the communication costs for doing so are so low so as to be almost insignificant. The Internet is for Benkler a technology that can significantly reduce such communication transaction costs.

This system of information quality control is what Benkler (2006) describes with the concept of "collaborative filtering" (p. 172; 465), which suggests that the presence of

a great number of interested individuals in the sphere of the commons, acting as peers, produces a "coordinate effect" (p. 5; p. 495) that settles information into a particular distributed order. Collaborative filtering, Benkler observes, is "the coordinate behavior of many autonomous individuals" (p. 172). This behavior "settles on an order that permits us to make sense of the tremendous flow of information that results from universal practical ability to speak and create" (p. 172).

The informational topology of the commons – its order – is a decentralized structure that naturally emerges from the participation of millions of individuals whose input is then collaboratively filtered to ensure its quality. In the economy of social production, Benkler suggests, we "observe a significant degree of order" (p. 172) – an order that emerges organically from the freedom of individual expression and which leads, in turn, to the construction of a public sphere in which information is filtered, sorted, and made valuable to everyone without "anyone exerting formal legal control or practical economic power" (p. 173). This seemingly natural order emerges from the expression and aggregation of billions of individual wills: "participation in the commons," Benkler argues, "starts with the question: What do I care about most now?" (p. 260).

In other words, the freedom to participate, to create, and to filter content, Benkler (2006) proclaims, leads organically to a networked order that is better than the mass-mediated structures of the industrial era. When "users self-organize to filter the universe of information that is generated in the network" (p. 256), we observe the emergence of a natural order, Benkler argues, that is "not too concentrated and not too chaotic, but rather" much closer to being "'just right'" (p. 239). This order leads, in turn, to improved

conditions of equality for Benkler. The new economy and society of commons, he notes, "likely results in significant redistribution of wealth, and no less importantly, power, from previously dominant firms and business models" (p. 468). This is not of course a new world of perfect equality, but at least one that constitutes a significant improvement over the industrial era in terms of social justice.

A good way to further explain how Benkler imagines the process of peer production, and how it naturally welds individual freedom with a relatively more egalitarian society, is by visiting his model of the networked public sphere – a widely used theoretical concept that he borrows and refits from one of its most famous proponents, Jürgen Habermas. In the pages below I offer a brief description of what Benkler understands to be the networked public sphere and I then analyze one of his examples in order to further explicate the foundational political ideals that are present in his work.

Commons-based Equality: The Networked Public Sphere

Benkler claims that his concept of the networked public sphere is borrowed from Habermas theory of the mass-mediated public sphere. Quoting a passage from Habermas, Benkler (2006) suggests the public sphere is a "network for communicating information and points of view (i.e., opinions expressing affirmative or negative attitudes)" that are sorted "in such a way that they coalesce into bundles of topically specified public opinions" (p.181).

The public sphere in most liberal countries during the industrial era, Benkler argues, was dominated by the "mass media," which at times were able to perform the

"critical watchdog function over government processes" but which, more often than not, undermined the quality of public debate by focusing on the business of "selling eyeballs to advertisers" (p. 185). Benkler argues that such a mass-mediated public sphere was both concentrated, a problem that stemmed from the industrial organization of the press into hierarchical firms, as well as commercialized, a problem that stemmed from the reliance of the press on the marketplace.

The rise of a networked public sphere does not signify for Benkler however the total replacement of markets or hierarchies in the making and disseminating of news. But it constitutes a widening of the public sphere's structure through the inclusion of a third space of commons-based peer production for news. While mainstream media and the markets in which they operate remain powerful, Benkler suggests, the rise of networked technologies such as the Internet arms citizens with the tools that redistribute the power to speak, and the ability to be effectively heard, in the networked public sphere. This is a new sphere of public communication that is less commercialized, less hierarchical, and more participatory.

The networked public sphere constitutes a "qualitative change" in the way democratic speech is performed, notes Benkler, that embraces a flatter "topology" in "which order emerges…without re-creating the failures of the mass-media-dominated public sphere" (p. 12). This suggests that in the networked public sphere everyone is "a potential speaker, as opposed to simply a listener and voter" (p. 213) and that, thus, everyone can – and as Benkler observes many in fact do – participate in the construction of commons-based movements that challenge the political and economic status quo.

The growth of the networked public sphere has allowed citizens to "monitor and disrupt the use of mass-media power, as well as organize for political action," Benkler (2006) argues. And this has allowed citizens to "play the role traditionally assigned to the press in observing, analyzing, and creating political salience for matters of public interest" (p. 220). It is this particular role as citizens who form a participatory press that I analyze below in order to unearth the normative narrative that informs Benkler's understanding of the networked public sphere.

The Networked Pubic Sphere and The Diebold Voting Machine Story

"Electronic voting machines were fist used to a substantial degree in the United States in the November 2002 elections" (p. 226), argues Benkler. But before their first widespread use, there was little information in the mainstream press that would raise concerns with regard to the faulty nature of those machines – especially the ones produced by Diebold Electronic Systems, a company that was one of the "leading manufacturers of electronic voting machines," and which provided the United States with "more than 75,000 voting machines" (p. 225). Before the elections the mainstream press, Benkler notes, offered only "sparse…coverage of electronic voting machines," placing its "emphasis…mostly on the newness, occasional slops, and the availability of technical support staff to help at the polls" (p. 226).

After the election, mainstream media such as the *New York Times* and *The Washington Post* continued to follow the story of electronic voting, covering some cases of faulty Diebold machines. Their coverage was overall, however, "remarkably devoid of any serious inquiry into how secure and accurate voting machines were, and included a high quotient of soothing comments from election officials who bought the machines and

executives of the manufacturers who sold them." Indeed, "no mass-media outlet," Benkler concludes, "sought to go the behind the claims of the manufacturers about their machines" (p. 226).

But someone else did, a participant in the newly emergent networked public sphere. "In late January 2003, Bev Harris," "an activist" from New Zealand who was "focused on electronic voting machines" decided to do "research on Diebold" (p. 226), Benkler informs us. In fact, Harris was already running a site for "whistle-blowers" and when she received a tip that exposed some software security holes in the Diebold system in the United States, she managed to gain access to "more than forty thousand files" about how the Diebold "system works" (p. 227). Then, Harris wrote about what she found, primarily noting how the source code for the electronic machines was openly accessible to the public, which meant that anyone with a computer and some time to code would be able to disrupt the very integrity of American elections – at least the integrity of the polls in which Diebold was involved in. Harris posted her reports on a platform that was willing to publicize such relevant materials. But content on the platform was not widely read, as Benkler implies, and if that wasn't enough, its main target audience was New Zealanders.

In her reports, Harris makes a "call to arms" (p. 228) to the digital communities of interested individuals who are willing to help further investigate the dangers of an open and accessible Diebold source code, Benkler observes. The results were impressive. Harris' call elicited a "large number of people" who were able to "participate in a peer-production enterprise of news gathering, analysis, and distribution," as Benkler notes, and which revealed an "unsettling set of claims" (pp. 226-227). Eventually, the community

that emerged around the investigation of these files, and which "included academics studying electronic systems, activists, computer systems practitioners, and mobilized students" (p. 232), was able to relocate the issue from the margins to the center of the American public sphere. The attention that these communities gave to the matter meant that the issue would be picked up by a variety of websites of medium and large influence and, ultimately, by the mainstream media. This investigation, which began from a single interested user, led to official reviews of voting systems and the eventual "decertification of many of the Diebold machines" (p. 232), Benkler argues.

What is most interesting in this example is not merely the capacity of a few individuals to draw the attention to mainstream media – to engage in what media scholars describe as the "agenda setting" function[19]. Rather, what is important here is the idea that lurks in the background of Benkler's narrative, and which has to do with the spontaneity with which the networked pubic sphere is expected to work. The Diebold events, like many other stories in Benkler's book, were not coordinated by either markets or hierarchies but rather emerged organically from the expression and aggregation of individual interests.

This effort thrived because it relied, Benkler (2006) suggests, on the decentralized structure of communication of the networked public sphere. The success of the Diebold story did not come from the "prestige and money of a *Washington Post* or a *New York Times*," Benkler proclaims, but rather from the "radically distributed effort of students and peer-to-peer network users around the Internet" (p. 232). There was not any "single orchestrating power" that prompted the unfolding of events, he notes, "neither party nor

[19] see, for example: McCombs & Shaw (1993).

commercial media outlet." But "there was instead," and here is the crucial point that Benkler makes, "a series of uncoordinated but mutually reinforcing action by individuals in different settings and contexts, operating under diverse organizational restrictions and affordances, to expose, analyze, and distribute criticism and evidence for it" (p. 232). In the Diebold story, such "radically distributed methods of investigation, analysis, distribution and resistance to suppression" (p. 262) appeared because the processes of "peer production" (p. 262) made them possible. It was "only after the networked public sphere developed the analysis and debate," performed by individuals such as the students and bloggers involved in this story, that "the mass media caught on, and then only gingerly" (p. 262).

In this example, and in many others that constitute a sturdy pattern in the rise of the new information economy more generally, as Benkler (2006) argues, one can see clear evidence of the organic emergence of a decentralized order that is founded on the participation of ordinary citizens – on the participation of "intensely engaged active participants" (p. 232) who are focused "precisely on what is most intensely interesting" (p. 232) to them, personally.

Personal interest, however, is not what prevails in the aggregate, Benkler argues. If that was the case, then the Diebold case and any other case for that matter would never exist. The networked public sphere, Benkler (2006) observes, is not a space of millions of small private expressions, but a sphere where private expression culminates into something bigger and better – a sphere where "hundreds of millions of people can publish whatever and whenever they please without disintegrating in a cacophony'" (p. 253). The networked public sphere is not an "abyss of incoherent babble," Benkler argues, but

"instead, through iterative processes of cooperative filtering," it is a space that allows for a "vastly larger number of speakers than was imaginable in the mass media model" (p. 255).

In Benkler's (2006) networked public sphere, it seems, we can realize freedom alongside equality: "We are witnessing a fundamental change in how individuals can interact with their democracy and experience their role as citizens" (p, 272), Benkler argues. "Ideal citizens…need not be limited to reading the opinions of opinion makers and judging them in private conversations" (p. 272). Citizens, that is, are "no longer constrained to occupy the role of mere readers, viewers, and listeners. They can be instead, participants in a conversation" (p. 213). Rather than the media being controlled by either markets or "managers," we are faced today with a public sphere that can "be rooted in the life and experience of individual participants in society," Benkler attests. This allows "citizens to be creators and primary subjects" within a radically decentralized and thus significantly more egalitarian public sphere. "In this sense," Benkler announces to his readers, "the internet democratizes" (p. 272).

Conclusion: Why Yochai Benkler is not Jürgen Habermas

As I discuss above, Yochai Benkler's vision of the most salient political feature in his work – the networked public sphere – is founded on his reading of Jürgen Habermas. My analysis in this chapter brings to the surface some of the core political ideals in Benkler's work and, in conclusion, I will explain here how those are different from Habermas' actual understanding of the public sphere – differences that make a qualitative

difference in our understanding of the role of communication in an informational democracy.

For Habermas (1990), a public sphere is democratic when it operates under the principle of "universalization" (p. 57), and when it also embraces a form of communication that adheres to the idea of "intersubjectivity" (p. 67). I discuss these two concepts extensively in the first chapter of this dissertation, so I will tend here to the reasons why a focus on those helps differentiate Habermas from Benkler and discuss, albeit briefly, how they help explain the contentious relationship between the values of individual freedom and social equality – a relationship that Benkler seems to miss.

Habermas' principle of universalization presumes that every person or group affected by a particular political decision should be heard in the public sphere; that their words and opinions should be tended to carefully by all others who also have a stake in that decision. In the conceptual language of this dissertation, this principle points to the need of moderating individual freedom of speech in the face of the requirement that all relevant individuals or groups are adequately heard in the public sphere. In the Habermasian public sphere, in other words, there is clear trade-off between the right to speak and the equality in time and space allotted to the speech of each participant. One cannot fully realize the one without somehow reducing the other to some degree.

In addition, Habermas does not designate any specific institutional structure as the safekeeper of the principle of universalization in a democratic society – we could, in one of its potential instances, imagine a public sphere where the government, or any other legitimate external social structure, regulates speech for universality; any such kind of institution would act as a moderator that applies the rule of universalization on the public

sphere's communicative traffic. That is, Habermas does not tell us exactly how universalization can be brought about; rather, his main concern is to defend the reasons why this principle is central to an ideal democratic society.

Additionally, Habermas suggests that communication in the public sphere is conducted under conditions of intersubjectivity – under the realization of the natural capacity that humans have to take the perspective of others, and to understand how others, in different social settings and with different life circumstances, may have formed their own preferences and opinions. When individuals engage in public sphere deliberations they are expected to consider, that is, both their private good but to also orient themselves towards an understanding of the good of others.

Benkler's view as it is laid out in his magnum opus omits (a) the crucial discussion of the opportunity cost between social equality and individual freedom. Additionally, (b) it presumes to possess a knowledge of the actual mechanism that can bring about both freedom and equality. Finally, Benkler's view of (c) the individual self as other-oriented is more narrowly defined than Habermas'.

First, for Benkler a freedom to speak in the networked public sphere is limitless. Cyberspace helps attain the ideal of unlimited private expression in the absence of physical constraints and as such, Benkler seems to suggest, individual speech does not ever have to be curtailed. The ability to exercise such individual freedom is for Benkler a positive development not only in terms of personal rights, but also in terms of the community as a whole. Contrary to Habermas' view, Benkler's networked public sphere appoints a limitless right for individual speech that coexists – and in fact helps construct – a decentralized social geography of peer-like social interaction. Or to put it more

simply, in the networked public sphere individual freedom seems to coincide with a relative equality of result.

Second, Benkler appears to have discovered the proper mechanism that transforms individual expression into a diverse and balanced public sphere. In this sense, the process of speech moderation is not an unknown for Benkler, as it is for Habermas. As I have shown in this chapter, public speech moderation happens for Benkler organically, with the acting moderating entity being neither the state nor the market but the global community itself – a community whose members are able and willing to regulate cultural expression and who transform it, as if by an invisible collective hand, into a cultural product that is diverse and decentralized, or in other words, egalitarian.

Finally, Benkler's claim about the nature of the individual citizen in the information society conflates the expression of private emotion with an emotionally informed, yet reasoned and reasonable individual orientation towards the generalized other. Benkler's ideal democratic citizen is a person who is concerned primarily with being playful and emotionally satisfied and who sees others in the community through that private prism. The ideal participant in Habermas' public sphere, on the other hand, engages in both reason and emotion, understands both private needs and the needs of others, and solicits in the process of decision-making perception and opinion as well as fact.

In this chapter, I delved into the ideological assumptions that sustain Benkler's optimism about the capacity of the networked public sphere – and of the realm of digital commons more generally – to deliver us with a society that simultaneously embraces liberal demands for individual freedom and republican demands for social equality. If we

were to accept Benkler's ideals about the nature of the Internet today – and I suspect many of us have – we would expect that the absence of any type of content regulation is the best policy for the Internet's democratic future. Avoiding regulation, whether by law or by adding a price system for communications, Benkler's theory presumes, delivers us with a public sphere that naturally achieves both freedom and equality. Isn't this, after all, what many of us had hoped would happen when social media first emerged as platforms of free communication inside distributed networks of friends, colleagues, and peers

Conclusion

Always On, Always Sharing: Affective Citizenship in an Information Democracy

In this dissertation I unearth the political ideals of three canonical theories of the information society. Utilizing the analytical lens of liberal and republican democratic theory, I engage in a close reading of seminal works by Daniel Bell, Manuel Castells, and Yochai Benkler, with an aim to explicate the background normative assumptions that support the images of rising information societies that these scholars skillfully paint.

In the pages of this concluding chapter, I present the four key findings of this dissertation. While each substantive chapter on Bell, Castells, and Benkler should also be read as a stand-alone critique of the democratic ideals in the magnum opus of each scholar, what I develop here is an analysis of the common democratic threads, and their subtle evolution, as they emerge from a comparative reading of a body of scholarly work that spans more than thirty years.

I begin with a discussion of the ways in which my dissertation confirms arguments in mainstream secondary literature, which suggests that the theories of these three scholars transition progressively, from Bell to Castells to Benkler, from classic liberalism to neoliberalism. Their democratic models too, I suggest in this dissertation, follow an analogous trajectory.

But that is not all, of course. The second finding of this dissertation pertains to the exposure of another consistent thread of political theory – a Marxist, or more broadly a republican, thread that permeates the democratic ideology of each of these three scholars.

This is an interpretation that complicates the typically monothematic critique of theories of the information society as either liberal or neoliberal.

Furthermore, the third finding has to do with the presence of two normative presumptions – two particular political ideals – that stand at the center of an emerging model of information democracy as these three scholars understand it. First, these scholars presume that their ideal democratic subject strongly manifests the affective trait of social awareness; their models of democracy presume a citizen who is always ready and eager to understand others, to share, to empathize. This is, of course, a reversal of the classic liberal tenet that presumes that individuals are self-interested, or at the very least, indifferent to the realization of the common good.

Second, these three scholars subscribe to a theory of information as a foundational social edifice; information operates in their view as a dynamic communicative social infrastructure that supports, and feeds into, the democratic citizen's inherent need for social awareness. The primary democratic role of information flows in their model is to provide individuals with the necessary knowledge that allows them to exercise their presumed natural tendency to understand and empathize with others in society.

Taken together, these two conditions form the basis of the model of the information democracy that these scholars envision. These conditions operate, in other words, as the two normative axioms from which an ideal information democracy comes alive. The presence of these axioms allows in turn – and this is the fourth and final finding of this dissertation – for these scholars to weld the liberal ideal of individual freedom with the republican (and Marxist) ideal of a broader public good. In many ways running parallel to the democratic theory of deliberative democratic scholars such as

Jürgen Habermas (1990; 1993; 1994; 2006) and Iris Marion Young (2000; 2011), the democratic model of the information society realizes the common good through the affective orientation of each and every individual towards the social other, and through the presence of flows of information and knowledge that support such an orientation.

As I note in my critique in the final pages of this chapter, this model of democracy implicitly presumes a theory of individual psychology for the ideal democratic citizen. This approach to democracy is in direct conflict, however, with earlier views of an industrial society that separates the private realm of the psyche from the realm of public affairs; these earlier approaches saw industrial bureaucracies, for example, as protections against the distorting presence of private affect in civic life. Second, the particular theory of individual psychology that these three scholars assume is, as I discuss below, deterministic: it presumes the presence of a certain set of affective characteristics – chiefly, the inherent tendency for socially-awareness – and thus by association excludes as undemocratic a whole other range of emotional expressions. This model proposes that individuals necessarily, and by default, are willing to put in the emotional labor required for empathizing with the social other; it leaves no room for, nor appreciates, the potential democratic value of living a private life. An information democracy confines its ideal citizens into a subjectivity that is always emotionally at work – always on, always empathetic, always other-oriented.

From Liberalism to Neoliberalism

The secondary literature analyzing the work of Bell, Castells, and Benkler is quite vast. Yet, while the theories of the information society that these three scholars develop

are tightly aligned, rarely are they investigated in tandem. The first contribution of my dissertation is therefore exactly that: To place into conversation the work of Bell, Castells, and Benkler and to produce a coherent commentary on the evolution of democratic ideals in theories of the information society. Through this process, I am also able to offer in this dissertation a synthesis of what remains an otherwise scattered secondary literature on these scholars.

In fact, when seen as a whole, this literature suggests that Bell, Castells, and Benkler progressively transition from liberalism to neoliberalism. For example, as Ampuja and Koivisto (2014) note, while Daniel Bell's theory is Keynesian – or in other words, adheres to classic liberal ideas of state intervention in the economy – Castells' "theory represents, a neoliberally restructured vision of 'information society' that is associated with the rise of flexibility, individuality, and a new culture of innovation" (p. 447). Similarly, Terranova (2009, p. 251) argues that Benkler's theory in his *Wealth of Networks* relies on an amalgam of liberalism and neoliberalism.

I do not disagree with these readings these three scholars of the information society. In fact, in this dissertation I have exposed the relevance of liberal and neoliberal ideals as they appear within their models of democracy. Consider how, for example, Daniel Bell's democratic model embraces the idea that individual freedom operates in conjunction with the presence of public institutions such as the state. For Castells on the other hand, the state recedes in the background. As a result, his democratic model amplifies the organizational significance of social networks – blends of loosely connected institutions and individuals – that operate one level above, and one level below, the nation-state. These networks are locked into a relentless conflict reflected by the clash

between the Net and the Self. This conflict, I show in this chapter, may be brought to rest through the emergence of an autonomous, that is in other words non-state supported, social movement.

Similar to Castells, yet even more aggressively, Benkler's democratic ideals propose the eradication of the role of the state in social life. A democratic society emerges for Benkler through the individual actions of internally motivated citizens who, without any external support from the state, willfully band together to construct egalitarian spaces of commons-based peer collaboration. While Benkler claims that such commons arise also without the support of a market system – not merely, that is, in the absence of a hierarchical state – his view of the democratic commons still oozes with neoliberal ideals of extreme individualism. In his democratic theory, individuals are agents who bootstrap the rise of an egalitarian political community.

Welding Liberalism and Marxism

Beyond the liberal and neoliberal aspects implicit in such canonical works of the information society, in this dissertation I also showcase the persistent presence of another ideological thread in each scholar – one that complicates the existing secondary literature and which opens up as many questions as it provides answers to the future critic. This thread has to do with the commitment that all three scholars show towards a common good that is more than a mere aggregation of individual wills. This approach, I argue, has deep roots not only in Marxist theory, but more broadly in the philosophical tradition that is closely associated to Marxism – republicanism.

For example, as I show in chapter two, Daniel Bell began his career as a moderate Marxist, only to later gradually slide towards a more centrist liberal framework. In fact, a few alternative analyses of Bell's work already expose such Marxist roots – especially the lucid intellectual histories of Howard Brick (1986) and Neil Jumonville (1991). In my chapter on Bell, I offer further evidence in support of this link and additionally indicate how Bell constructively welds Marxist political ideals with more moderate liberal democratic views.

The thread of Marxism exists not only in the work of Daniel Bell – it persists, as I show in this dissertation, as a theoretical framework in the works of other scholars within this tradition of thought. For example, one of the first theorists of the postindustrial society, Alain Touraine, was a post-Marxist who Daniel Bell read and who was also, and more importantly, Manuel Castells' advisor. And indeed, like Bell, Castells began his career as a Marxist. In fact, one of Castells' (1978) first books titled *City, Class, and Power*, became the focal point of Marxist urban theory in the seventies, selling over one-hundred thousand copies (Castells & Ince, 2003). In the early eighties, with his following book *The City and the Grassroots*, Castells (1983) explicitly relocates his work within more centrist liberal ideals, but as I show in chapter three, he never entirely embraces the classic pluralist liberal paradigm.

Marxist ideas never disappear from the background of Castells' work. Rather, they inform his theoretical framework, especially his view of a rising information society mired in intense political conflict. The struggle between the Net and the Self for example is a classic Marxist – even Hegelian – theme of Master versus Slave, while the social movement appears as the sublimation that can bring peace between the two conflicting

political edges. Social movements represent for Castells, as they do for Touraine, the transformational power once possessed by the labor class in the industrial era – they encapsulate the evolution of Marxist ideas of radical social change from the industrial to the postindustrial society; from material- to information- based economies. In the rising information society, radical change does not reside anymore with the labor class but rather exists in social movements, which do aim to appropriate the material means of production but to change the political conscience of public opinion. A similar view about the rise of a New Class (p. 1) with a new political conscience appears in the post-Marxist language of the American left as represented in the work of Alvin Gouldner (1979), who I also discuss in chapters two and three.

Finally, Yochai Benkler is a scholar who explicitly argues that his theory has nothing to do with Marxism, suggesting that his approach is instead squarely situated within the liberal tradition. But as I show in chapter four, that is definitely not the case. While Benkler paints images that exalt the ideals of freedom and individualism, he also suggests that the liberation of personal expression will lead to a more equitable – almost socialistic – democratic society. Benkler is by far the least nuanced philosophical thinker of the three, as his theory lacks the delicate conceptual argumentation necessary to attenuate the tensions between Marxist visions of social equality and liberal visions of individual liberty.

The Two Democratic Axioms of an Information Democracy

Regardless of their individual variations or philosophical depth, however, seen in tandem these three scholars present us with a democratic blueprint on how republican

ideals of the common good can coexist with liberal ideals of individual freedom. These typically incommensurable ideals are connected in the work of these three scholars through two key operational concepts – two normative axioms – that together sustain the democratic model of the information society that these three scholars propose.

First, all three scholars presume that the ideal democratic citizen embraces a particular set of emotional dispositions – mainly, a sensitivity and orientation towards the needs and desires of others. These scholars presume, in other words, that the democratic citizen showcases a strong affective preference for communicating with others; this is in their view a stable psychological trait of the democratic individual. As I show in chapter two, for Bell this trait is encapsulated in the concept of the other-oriented individual; as I argue in chapter three, for Castells this manifests in the idea of a socially aware individual who willfully joins a social movement; lastly, as I underscore in Chapter four, for Benkler this trait appears in his understanding of the individual psyche as both playful and socially active.

This orientation towards the social other is the first axiom, the first step, towards the establishment of an argument that blends liberal ideals of freedom with republican ideals of the common good. Once citizens are, by default, oriented towards social action – towards sharing and collaborating, towards listening and understanding – then it is also easy to suggest that their participation in, and alignment with, the common good is a natural result of their social orientation. Other-oriented citizens, all three scholars presume, will be able to realize and act in favor of the common good because they are first able and willing to listen, to learn, and to share. Such a presumption of an individual willingness to communicate with others, which all three scholars embrace tacitly as I

show in each respective chapter, allows for their democratic approaches to combine liberal individualism with more robust republican approaches to the common good.

The second element of the information model of democracy as these three scholars understand it, is the presence of information as a process. In other words, the concept of information in their theories does not refer to some static entity stored in some database somewhere, but pertains to the idea of information as a dynamic social exchange, as a continuous circulation and social ritual that helps develop a communicative edifice that feeds, in turn, the individual citizens' need for social awareness.

Information flows thus appear in the work of these three scholars as a critical organizational component, as a "cultural infrastructure" (p. 73) to put it in Fred Turner's (2009) words, that sustains the information democracy's other-oriented citizenship. In the collective democratic model of these three scholars, flows of information and knowledge circulate within the community, spreading far and wide the voice of one citizen into the ears of another. These information flows help thus construct a society that is democratic exactly because its citizens have enough informational fodder, enough access to knowledge, to satisfy their innate capacity to share, listen, and empathize with the other.

Taken together, these two axioms point to a theory of democracy that expects individual citizens to be attuned to the needs of others, and which demands that social structures are communicative enough to allow for a flexible interweaving of individual desires into a collaborative social whole. Such a model of information democracy welds, to put it in classic democratic theory terms, a republican demand for the common good with a liberal demand for individual freedom by presuming that our hearts and minds are

open and ready to listen, and by assuming that enough informational flows exist for everyone to learn, understand, and empathize with each other's experiences.

Seen under this light, it is thus quite easy to see why these three scholars resort to the metaphor of the academic community, and to notions of education more generally, as the basis of their proper political community. As I show in chapter two, Daniel Bell's ideal democratic society is constructed as a mirror image of the professional scholarly community of his time – a community that expects its citizens to internalize the common good but whose behavior is also moderated by the presence of public institutions. In chapter three, similarly, I discuss how Castells proposes that social movements emerge from a social awareness that develops naturally when individuals attain a knowledge that orients them towards the common good. In chapter four, I note how Benkler conjures up the ideal of a schoolteacher who is internally motivated, playful and creative, but who is also responsible and caring towards others in the community. These metaphors are but different manifestations of the same democratic ideal, which presumes that citizens of the information society are ready and willing – always attuned – to receive, repurpose, and expand the knowledge afforded to them by the free flows of information in this new kind of open and accessible knowledge-based society.

Taken together, these two axioms – an affective orientation towards others and information as a dynamic structural process – may appear to be quite reasonable, even perhaps minimally burdensome, as normative demands for the realization of an ideal information democracy. Indeed, would it be that extreme to presume that increasing access to knowledge also improves the democratic foundations of our modern society?

This argument appears today in many public discussions as synonymous with common sense.

But relying on common sense may at times be problematic. This model of information democracy – which these three scholars take for granted – is in fact deterministic and substantially burdensome; not on the level of its institutional requirements, that is, but on the level of its presumptions about the individual psyche of its ideal citizens. For all three scholars – and especially for Castells and Benkler – the inner self is burdened with the expectation that it is always on, always willing to connect, and forever positively oriented towards the social other. To put it differently, that self can never substantively look inwards, resort to the private and the non-public, without being also seen as fundamentally undemocratic.

This model of information democracy thus inverts one of the classic tenets of liberalism, which presumes a clear boundary between the internal desires of citizens and their external behavior towards others. On the contrary, this model of information democracy relies explicitly on the idea that its citizens possess and exercise a strong affinity towards others, and assumes that this, in turn, naturally and freely directs them to the fusion of their internal desires with the demands of the greater common good. For republican and liberal ideals to coincide, that is, this model of democracy presumes that individual freedom to act is by default tied to an affective disposition to connect with the social other.

An information democracy, at least as these three mainstream scholars suggest, proposes a citizen who is free from bureaucratic red tape but who is unfree in her emotional expression. Quite ironically, this model of democracy is thus liberal in its

deconstruction of bureaucracies but illiberal with the affective kinds of labor it demands from its individual citizens. As a result, this model runs the danger of excluding – delegitimizing as undemocratic – the kinds of emotional expression that do not fall inside its limited affective parameters. It may consider as problematic, for example, processes of introspection and private thought because they appear to contradict the worldview of the other-oriented individual as a person who always openly collaborates with others in the public sphere. In addition, with its somewhat naive view of sharing as a necessarily positive democratic process, this model does not provide us with a sufficient moral language that would help us make sense of, and help us decide how to deal with, the situations where uncritical acceptance of sociability may actually challenge democracy – when sharing becomes a form of spreading falsehoods, distorting facts, and construing "alternative" news. Perhaps we don't know how to approach these cases, how to separate the wheat from the chaff, exactly because we are accustomed to think of information transparency as a necessary and rather indisputable prerequisite of a democratic society.

Deliberative Democratic Theorists and Information Society Scholarship: Concluding Remarks

These three information society scholars, as I have shown in this dissertation, share a lot with models of democracy that place communication at its center – especially deliberative democratic theorists such as Iris Marion Young (2000; 2011) and Jürgen Habermas (1990; 1993; 1994; 2006). Like Bell, Castells, and Benkler, such theorists amalgamate liberalism with Marxism; they propose a democratic model in which self-governance coincides with an individual orientation towards the common good. And the

transition between these two ideals in their theories of democracy, again like Bell, Castells, and Benkler, takes place through the process of communication.

Of course, as I discuss in chapter one on democratic models, Young and Habermas offer substantive theories with regard to what communication ideally looks like in a deliberative democratic setting. And in fact, it would be invalid to directly compare the normative analytical qualities of democratic scholars on the one hand, and information society scholars on the other. The former's explicit focus is to lay out a model of democracy, while for the latter democratic ideals exist mostly in the background of their sociological theories. With this caveat in mind, however, what I deduce constituently as a common factor to both strands of scholarship is a particular assumption about the central role of affect in democratic life. Habermas describes this through the concept of intersubjectivity, Young embraces this through her discussion of active forms of participatory citizenship.

Habermas and Young situate their theories on a diverse view of the individual psyche; they embroider it with philosophical nuance and propose a variety of deliberative conditions under which people are supposed to communicate. For Habermas, the ideal individual citizen is not merely intersubjective (or in other words, empathetic) but also rational, producing speech that is based on the combination of facts and opinion. Even more so, Young expects that factual discussion will be combined in the public sphere with other forms of meaningful expression, such as those that emerge from the emotions and vulnerabilities usually associated with the life experiences of those most marginalized. Their deliberative democratic theories are, thus, a far cry from the stilted

images of other-oriented, and typically highly educated, citizens that Bell, Castells, and Benkler tacitly yet clearly paint in their sociological imaginations.

Yet, seen together, all these scholars – Young and Habermas, as well as Bell, Castells, and Benkler – have this in common: their models of democracy require the development of a theory of individual psychology. The most intriguing finding of this dissertation is, thus, at once implicit in the work of these three information society scholars, but also something that stands at the forefront of current thinking in communication research. A line of cultural critical scholars (eg.: Ames, 2019; Papacharissi, 2015; Terranova, 2000; Turner, 2019, to name just a few) have revealed to us consistently and convincingly the many faces, and many perils, of affect in political and economic life. These scholars, by and large, point to a process of affectivization of society, if I am permitted the neologism.

My dissertation adds a new perspective that falls within this broader line of research, as it brings to light the implicit relationships between a particular set of democratic ideals and mainstream theories of the information society. The model of the information democracy inherent in the work of Bell, Castells, and Benkler proposes that the emotional world of individual citizens is politically relevant, in fact indispensable, to the construction of a proper democratic life. This is, in itself, a major reversal from earlier theories of industrial society that saw developments such as impersonal political structures, bureaucratic procedures, and objective credentials, as foundations of a democratic polity – a polity that presumed that what one does in private should not have a bearing on, be seen or critiqued by, participants in the public sphere. In this dissertation, I elucidate how the democratic ideals of canonical information society theorists

deconstruct the barrier between private and public life, and how they convert the realm of the inner psyche into a structural component of a democratic society.

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