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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses civil society as a central idea in the recent global resurgence of democracy. Recent developments represent a turning away from state-centered conceptions of government, and a renewal of voluntary, community-based, non-governmental organizations as a means of renewing democracy. As civil society has surged globally, it has sagged in the United States, its progenitor and long-time exemplar. The time is ripe to seek a renewal of U. S. civil society through civic education and current educational reforms can lead to such renewal of civil society. The paper is divided into four parts: (1) "The Idea of Civil Society: Its Modern Origins and Development"; (2) "Civil Society and the Democratic State"; (3) "Civil Society in Democratic Consolidation"; and (4) "Civil Society in Civil Education for Democracy." (EH)

Civil Society in Democracy's Third Wave: Implications for Civic Education

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Abstract

Civil society has been a central idea in the recent global resurgence of democracy. It represents a turning away from state-centered conceptions of government, and a renewal of voluntary, community-based, non-governmental organizations as a means of renewing democracy. However, at this moment, when civil society has surged globally, it has sagged in the United States of America, its progenitor and long-time exemplar. The time is ripe, therefore, to seek a renewal of civil society in America through civic education. There is ample evidence in current educational reforms that the renewal of civil society through civic education is underway.

Civil Society in Democracy's Third Wave:

Implications for Civic Education

Three international waves of democratic development have occurred during the past two centuries (Huntington 1991). The first wave, rooted in the American and French revolutions, flowered from 1828-1926. There was a second, short wave between 1943-1962. And the world took notice of a dramatic, global resurgence of democracy during the 1980s and 1990s. Few, however, realized until recently that this massive movement toward democracy, dubbed the third wave by Samuel Huntington, began in 1974 with the overthrow of Portugal's dictatorship. Since then, the number of democracies throughout the world has increased greatly.

Before onset of the third wave, there were 40 countries that could be classified as democracies in terms of a widely accepted minimal definition: A political system is "democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote" (Huntington 1991, 7). This minimal definition implies the necessary exercise of civil and political rights to freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association in order for there to be fair, open, and competitive public elections. By this minimal definition, there are more than 100 democracies in today's world, as the third wave has continued (Diamond 1996, 20).

The most striking and pivotal part of democracy's third wave occurred in Central and Eastern Europe, where long-repressed peoples overthrew totalitarian regimes and began an unprecedented transformation from communistic tyranny to democratic freedom. Both the

methods and the mission of democratic development in Central and Eastern Europe revived an old and seemingly obsolescent idea, civil society.

Born in the era of European Enlightenment and advanced through the works of prominent nineteenth-century Europeans and Americans, the modern idea of civil society seemed to recede in the twentieth century. It is absent from Huntington's seminal formulation of the third wave. Further, civil society does not appear in other major twentieth-century treatises on the theory of democracy.[1]

No matter, the idea of civil society, in one form or another, has been instrumental in the later phases of democracy's third wave, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, but also in southern Europe, Latin America, and parts of Africa. And discussions of civil society have filled the pages of recent issues of the *Journal of Democracy* and other prominent publications.[2] So, a nearly dead idea has surged in the 1980s and 1990s to attract the attention of philosophers, politicians, and educators around the world.

What is civil society? What are its modern origins? How has it developed in modern times? How is it related to democracy in the state and society? How is it involved in democratic consolidation? And why is it an essential element of civic education for democracy? Political theorists and practitioners have been conducting important debates about these questions, which have great significance for civic educators in their efforts to develop capacities for democratic citizenship among communities of learners. Thus, the importance of civil society in democracy's third wave raises trends and issues for civic education that teachers and learners must confront.

The Idea of Civil Society: Its Modern Origins and Development

Civil society is a debatable concept, which has been used variously by political theorists

and practitioners during the past 300 years. Most, however, would agree that it pertains to "social interaction not encompassed by the state or the economy" (Dryzek 1996, 481). Further, most current users of the idea would likely agree, at least, that civil society is the complex network of freely formed voluntary associations, distinct from the formal governmental institutions of the state, acting independently or in partnership with state agencies. Apart from the state, but subject to the rule of law, civil society is a public domain that private individuals create and operate.

A primary and indispensable aspect of civil society is autonomy from the state (Schmitter 1995, 240). Examples of non-governmental organizations that constitute civil society are free labor unions, religious communities, human-rights advocacy groups, environmental protection organizations, support groups providing social welfare services to needy people, independent newspaper and magazine publishing houses, independent and private schools, professional associations, and so forth. An individual of a free country is likely to belong to many civil society organizations at once and throughout a lifetime. In the United States of America, for example, there is a long tradition among the citizens of multiple membership in non-governmental organizations.

Civil society is distinct from the state but not necessarily in conflict with it. Pluralist democracies, for example, include many different kinds of civil society organizations that act freely and independently of state control for the public good, which the state may also seek. Civil society organizations may act in harmony with the purpose of the state, if not always in agreement with particular state agencies. But they may also act as an independent social force to check or limit an abusive or undesired exercise of the state's power.

If necessary to advance the public good, civil society can be a countervailing force against the state. It can effectively oppose despotism and protect the civil liberties and rights of individuals and groups. Ernest Gellner, for example, argues (1995, 32), "Civil society is that set of diverse non-governmental institutions, which is strong enough to counterbalance the state, and whilst not preventing the state from fulfilling its role as keeper of the peace and arbiter between major interests, can nevertheless prevent the state from dominating and atomizing the rest of society."

The modern idea of civil society stems from its various uses in the political theories of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English and Scottish thinkers, such as John Locke, Francis Hutcheson, Adam Ferguson, and Adam Smith. In the nineteenth century, Alexis de Tocqueville, Georg W. F. Hegel, and Karl Marx conceptualized civil society variously in their very different political and social theories (Seligman 1992, 15-58). Nonetheless, despite differences in definitions and uses of civil society, it has always signified opposition to statism, to an all-encompassing government with little or no use for community-based initiative by private or non-governmental groups acting for the public good.

Some theorists of civil society, for example Locke, stressed its interactions with the state to secure personal and private rights to life, liberty, and property against the ever-present threat of tyranny. Others, such as Adam Ferguson, emphasized the positive moral consequences of community life grounded in civic virtue, whereby individuals freely acted together for their common good, instead of depending passively upon the beneficence of the state for their general welfare. "It is in conducting the affairs of civil society," wrote Ferguson, "that mankind find the exercise of their best talents, as well as the object of their best affections" (1995, 155).

Later, Tocqueville saw civil society as the stratum of voluntary, group-based public life that mediated the interactions of individuals with the state and thereby shielded them from its otherwise overwhelming power, which could, of course, be used for good or bad purposes. He especially emphasized the public good that could be achieved by free, self-reliant people acting together in voluntary, community-based organizations. Americans, he believed, were an example for the world about how to make democracy work for both the community and the individual. Tocqueville observed in the United States of the 1830s,

> Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions constantly form associations. They have not only commercial and manufacturing companies in which all take part, but associations of a thousand other kinds, religious, moral, serious, futile, general or restricted, enormous or diminutive. The Americans make associations to give entertainments, to found seminaries, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; in this manner they found hospitals, prisons, and schools. If it is proposed to inculcate some truths or to foster some example, they form a society. Wherever at the head of some new undertaking you see the government of France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find an association. (Bradley 1987, 106)

Tocqueville, like James Madison and John Locke before him, feared a new kind of state-centered despotism, the tyranny of the majority exercised through its representatives in democratic government. He looked to the voluntary organizations of civil society to thwart the threat of democratic despotism and to empower citizens cooperatively to achieve public ends instead of depending atomistically and defenselessly on the state for fulfillment of all needs. Thus,

the cooperation of all citizens through various community-based organizations would be a means to the security and liberty of each one.[3]

Pure Marxism, in distinction from the Leninist-inspired practices of the Soviet state and its several imitators of our twentieth-century world, also posited a conception of civil society distinct from the state. However, Marx, unlike Tocqueville, viewed civil society as superior to the state. He envisioned it as the final replacement for the state, the ultimate expression of a socialist utopia that would supplant the necessarily flawed state with perfect freedom, equality, and justice. By contrast, Tocqueville saw civil society in concert with the democratic state as interactive components of democratic governance.

During most of the twentieth century, the idea of civil society receded from its previously prominent place in political thought, and state-centered theories and practices ascended. Twentieth-century watchwords were centralization, big government, and planned economies. Carried to extremes, these statist ideas led to totalitarian regimes, such as Hitler's National Socialist Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union. Even democracies of the West, the staunch opponents of totalitarian communism and fascism, seemed to be moving during much of the twentieth century toward more and more centralized economic and social planning by experts in charge of governmental bureaucracies.

A vibrant civil society is the opponent of statism and the very antithesis of totalitarianism, which attempts to concentrate all power in a big, centralized government controlled by one political party. In the Soviet Union, for example, there was no room for civil society. Rather, the Communist Party through the state that it commanded was the generator and director of all significant political and social participation. There was an abundance of social organizations

involving large numbers of youth and adults, but none of them were independent or free of control by the Party and its state. The public domain was pervasive, and the rights to freedom and privacy of persons and groups were practically non-existent.

A vibrant civil society is also at odds with statist conceptions of democracy which, though not totalitarian in ends or means, may intrude extensively into the personal, social, and economic affairs of individuals and groups. For instance, the vitality of civil society was diminished by the welfare-statism of Britain's ruling Labour Party after World War II and by the 1960s Great Society program of the United States President Lyndon Johnson's Democratic Party. Prominent social scientists have documented the decline of civil society and voluntary public participation in the West, even in the United States — the supposed exemplar of democratic civil society since the publication in the 1830s of Tocqueville's celebrated *Democracy in America.* According to Robert Putnam (1995b, 65), "There is striking evidence that the vibrancy of American civil society has declined over the past several decades."

The central place of civil society in democracy's third wave, even if belatedly acknowledged by scholars, has brought this long-neglected idea back to the center of theoretical discourse and public life at the end of the twentieth century. Advocates of democracy throughout the world have understood that the emergence and growth of civil society organizations during the 1980s in former communist countries, such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, signaled the imminent fall of the once-dominant communist regimes. And, political theorists and practitioners everywhere are debating the place and significance of civil society, even the very meaning of the concept, in the consolidation of democratic gains of the third wave. So, civil society today seems to be an idea "whose time has come again" (Seligman 1992, 3). Discourse and disagreement

abound about the relationships between civil society and the democratic state. Is it really an ally of the democratic state or a threat to it? Or is it both friend or foe to some degree and more of one then the other in its different formulations? What are or should be the connections of civil society to the state in a democracy?

Civil Society and the Democratic State

Opposing positions in current international debates about civil society and democracy are represented by two recently published books: (1) *To Empower People: From State to Civil Society* by Americans Peter L. Berger and Richard John Neuhaus (1996) and (2) *The State and the Rule of Law* by French scholar Blandine Kriegel (1995). Berger and Neuhaus celebrate the late twentieth-century renewal of civil society and the corresponding possibility of a diminished state. By contrast, Kriegel warns advocates of civil society against the dangers of anti-statism, and she makes a case for the constitutional democratic state as an indispensable guarantor of human rights and dignity.

Berger and Neuhaus recognize the necessity of constitutionalism—the rule of law in the affairs of free societies—and the state's function in maintaining ordered liberty. But they stress the strictly limited government of negative constitutionalism to protect individual rights and enable the positive achievements of non-governmental organizations. Kriegel, by contrast, recognizes the state's potential for pro-social action through positive constitutionalism. And she stresses the rule of law to block state-centered despotism and to promote state-based programs that enable effective exercise of human rights.

Both positions have merit, but the Berger/Neuhaus argument best captures a current global trend in favor of decentralization, civic responsibility, and personal freedom in reaction to

the twentieth-century failures and dangers of statism. However, if their civil society argument would be practically successful, it must recognize, as Kriegel advises, the universal utility of a constitutional democratic state; that is, a democratic government both empowered and harnessed by the rule of law that the people establish and maintain through their constitution. This kind of constitutional democracy is sufficiently strong to achieve a country's shared purposes and sufficiently limited to prevent despotic destruction of freedom and rights.

A constitutionalized democratic government is empowered to protect individual rights to free expression, assembly, and association, which are necessary to the independent operations of civil society organizations. Thus, there is a top-down protection of civil society, from the constitutional government of the state to the local activities of the people, which guarantees the rights of individual freedom to join and conduct non-governmental organizations.

But there is also a bottom-up support for the constitutional democratic state, which stems from the "grass roots" through community-based, non-governmental organizations acting democratically for the public good. Local, regional, and national non-governmental organizations are channels by which citizens express their needs and interests to candidates for office and representatives in government for possible transformation into public policies. They are public guardians that empower citizens to take responsibility for their rights and hold public officials accountable to their constituents. Through participation in organizational activities, members acquire knowledge, skills, and virtues of democratic citizenship. So community-based, voluntary organizations are public laboratories in which citizens learn democracy by doing it, which contributes mightily to democratic governance of both the state and the civil society that it serves.

Civil society, then, can be conceived and practiced as an ally of any state governed by

constitutional democracy. The government of such a state is simultaneously limited and empowered for the common goal of securing rights to life, liberty, and property, which will be at risk if the government is either too strong or too weak. Its constitutionally imposed limitations disable the state from despotically infringing human rights and destroying the domain of freely formed and independently operated non-governmental organizations. At the same time, its constitutionally provided powers enable the democratic state effectively to enforce laws that protect and advance human rights, maintain order and safety necessary for productive organizational life, and provide social benefits in partnership with non-governmental organizations (Holmes 1995, 77-81).

The rule of law, grounded in a democratic constitution, is an indispensable regulator of governmental and non-governmental behavior that enables civil society to function freely for the common good. It is the key to theories of congruency between civil society and the democratic state. And it is the missing element of theories that put civil society inescapably in conflict with the democratic state and see it as the primary or superior locus of democracy.

Many third-wave, would-be democracies emerged from peaceful "grass roots" revolutions that signaled the incapacity of despotic states, once pervasively powerful, to suppress dissent expressed through civil society. So, civil society in these aspiring democracies seemed to represent the epitome of revoluntionary opposition to the state. But a civil society associated primarily with resistance to the state may be a marginal or dysfunctional factor in subsequent efforts to consolidate democracy through development of constitutional government.

The anti-communist revolutions of Central and Eastern Europe, for example, have spawned a disturbing and possibly destructive conception of civil society against the state. Many

Poles and Czechs, who led the *Solidarnosc* and Charter 77 movements against communist states during the 1980s, have continued to hold extreme anti-state and anti-government views, which have made it difficult for them to shift from a conception of civil society against a despotic communist state to civil society for and with the building of constitutional democracy (Smolar 1996).

Civil Society in Democratic Consolidation

The civil society concept of anti-communist revolutionaries was at odds with the classic formulations of Ferguson, Hutcheson, Smith, and Tocqueville, which emphasized "the ability of associational life in general and the habits of association in particular to foster patterns of civility in the actions of citizens in a democratic polity" (Foley and Edwards 1996, 39). The Tocquevillian idea of civil society, for example, points to the supportive effects of voluntary associations for governance of a democratic state and society; that is, to the positive consequences of civil society for the consolidation of a democratic state.

It is the Tocquevillian formulation of civil society, advanced articulately by the research of contemporary social scientists, such as Robert Putnam, that holds most promise for the consolidation of democracy in third-wave countries. According to Putnam (1993, 181-185), "The civic community [civil society] is marked by an active, public-spirited citizenry, by egalitarian political relations, by a social fabric of trust and cooperation," which he calls "social capital." This social capital is a public good; if most citizens have acquired it through participation in civil society organizations, they can use it to strengthen democracy in the government of the state. Further, Putnam's long-term research project in Italy indicates that a vibrant network of community-based voluntary organizations builds the social capital—civic virtues, skills, and

knowledge—needed for the consolidation of democracy. "Those concerned with democracy [its consolidation and efficacy] should be building a more civic community. We agree with [those who urge] local transformation of local structures [to build social capital] rather than reliance [only] upon national initiatives [because this is] the key to making democracy work."

The concept of social capital is the central pubic good related to development of civil society. It involves trust in our relations with one another: social trust and civic involvement are strongly correlated (Putnam 1995a, 665). And trust is essential to the establishment, maintenance, and efficacy of civil society organizations. People who trust one another can cooperate to achieve common interests. Conversely, alienated, atomized, cynical people are likely to remain outside civil society in a marginalized domain of inefficacy. Putnam explains, "By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—'social capital' refers to features of social organizations such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (1995b, 67).

Social capital is a foundation for both a stable democracy and a prosperous market economy. This concept is the centerpiece of Francis Fukuyama's best-selling work on the factors necessary for successful participation in the emerging global economic and political order. He argues, "A healthy capitalist economy is one in which there will be sufficient social capital in the underlying society to permit businesses, corporations, networks, and the like to be self-organizing.... That self-organizing proclivity is exactly what is necessary to make democratic political institutions work as well" (Fukuyama 1995, 356-357).

Civil society, the factors that generate and result from it, seems to be necessary for the

consolidation of constitutional democratic governance. Aspiring democracies of the third wave in which civil society thrives are promising candidates for the consolidation of democratic governance. And conversely, those countries with a weak or unsubstantial civil society, with little potential for developing social capital, have poor prospects for a democratic future.

Research on civil society within third-wave democracies reveals a mixed picture of problems and potential. In former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, civil society has continued to be seen by too many citizens as only a countervailing force against the state, which it was in bringing about the "velvet revolutions" of the recent past. But civil society's potential for building post-revolutionary democratic governance has not been realized.

Nonetheless, despite shortcomings of the moment, there is potential for a dynamic civil society in the future of post-communist countries, which is indicated by current activities. In Poland, for example, there are more than "15,000 associations, foundations, and self-help groups" (Micou and Lindsnaes, 1993, 56). The situation is similar in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Even in Romania, where democratization has proceeded rather weakly and slowly, there are hundreds of free, private-sector organizations, which the government tolerates (Micou and Lindsnaes 1993, 66-69). A country with a vital civil society has a realistic change to become and remain a democracy.

There are, however, notable weakness in civil society development in third-wave democracies throughout the world (Gyimah-Boadi 1996; Linz and Stepan 1996). Major deficiencies are:

- dependence upon external sources for funding, which compromises independence of action and accountability to members,

- inadequate distribution of information and communication technologies, which inhibits development of networks,
- low levels of social capital, which is necessary to effective operation of democratic non-governmental organizations,
- insufficient security for constitutional rights to freedom of speech, press, assembly, and associations, which critically inhibits or impedes the operation of independent non-governmental organizations.

The last problem, pertaining to insufficient protection of civil liberties and rights, indicates inadequate development of constitutionalism and the rule of law. Third-wave democracies all have constitutions that protect civil liberties, but in some of these countries, there has been uneven or spotty enforcement of human rights (Howard 1995 and Human Rights Watch 1996). The relationship of civil society to human rights is emphasized in the latest "World Report" of Human Rights Watch, "Often the best measure of governmental respect for human rights is the visible presence of people exercising these rights by forming organizations, assembling, speaking out publicly, and publishing independently" (1996, xxv).

By comparison with the rest of the world, the United States of America remains an exemplar of democratic civil society, as it was at the time of Tocqueville's nineteenth-century visit. According to Putnam (1995a, 666), "America still outranks many other countries in the degree of our community involvement and social trust." However, Putnam also documents the serious decline of civil society in America during the past forty years. He concludes, "American social capital in the form of civic associations has been significantly eroded over the last generation" (1995b, 73).

During a pivotal era of world history, when constitutional democracy has surged and totalitarian communism has declined, the idea of civil society has had a prominent place in global discussions and actions about democratic revolutions and consolidation. Ironically, civil society has sagged in America at the very moment of its global resurgence. According to Putnam, (1995b, 77), "High on America's agenda should be the question of how to reverse these adverse trends in social connectedness, thus restoring civic engagement and civic trust." Although Putnam's concern is broader than civic education in schools, it certainly includes this central domain of democratic development. So, what are the implications for civic education in American schools of global and national trends and issues on civil society?

Civil Society in Civic Education for Democracy

Given the global importance of civil society in democracy's third wave, this concept belongs in the core of the school curriculum. The idea of civil society is just as important in civic education for democracy as constitutionalism, human rights, popular sovereignty, and other time-honored concepts associated with democratic governance. If our students would know, analyze, and appraise democracy in their country or elsewhere, then they must know the concept of civil society, assess the activities of civil society organizations, and connect their knowledge of civil society to other core concepts in the theory and practice of democracy. Further, if our students would be equipped for responsible citizenship in a constitutional democracy, then they must develop civic skills and virtues needed for effective participation in civil society organizations.

To what extent are American students exposed to the concept of civil society in formal courses on civics and government? Examination of widely used textbooks for introductory courses in high schools and colleges reveals virtually no attention to civil society. None of the

best-selling textbooks on government includes civil society in its index (Jaffa et al. 1988; McClenaghan 1996; Remy 1996; Wilson and DiIulio 1995). The concept of civil society is also absent from the social studies curricular guides and frameworks of most state education departments. Thus, our students are deprived of basic knowledge about the theory and practice of democracy in the world. They are thereby disabled from accurately analyzing and comparing important global trends and issues on democracy.

One criterion among others that students should use to distinguish democratic from non-democratic governments is the presence or absence of a vital civil society. A government with power to crush or control civil society organizations cannot be an authentic constitutional democracy. A political system without a genuine civil society cannot truthfully claim to be a constitutional democracy. However, students deprived of the opportunity to learn the concept of civil society will not be able to use it as a criterion by which to comparatively analyze and appraise the operations of democratic and non-democratic governments of our world.

Despite the bad news of the recent past on civil society in the curricula of schools, there is hope for the future. There is evidence that the concept of civil society will become more prominent in the social studies curricula of American schools. For example, a recently issued publication, *National Standards for Civics and Government* (Center for Civic Education 1994), emphasizes civil society as a basic concept in education for democracy. These standards are likely to influence significantly the contents of the next generation of textbooks and curricular guides.

Another hopeful sign is the heavy emphasis on civil society in the framework of the *1998 NAEP Civics Assessment Planning Project* (Council of Chief State School Officers 1996). This framework guides the development of test items for the upcoming National Assessment of

Educational Progress (NAEP) in civics, which will be conducted in 1998. There will be several items about civil society in the 1998 civics assessment, as called for by the test specifications within the framework document.[4] These items on civil society in the civics national assessment will send a strong signal to textbook publishers, curricular guide developers, teachers, and parents of students about the importance of civil society in education for democracy. This kind of signal, when it is received by important segments of the education community, will lead to significant inclusion of civil society in the curricula of schools. So our student of the near future are likely to be more knowledgeable than students today and yesterday about civil society, a core concept of democracy.

Knowledge of civil society should be augmented by civic skills and virtues needed to implement this idea in civic life. So, behavioral skills and dispositions or virtues pertaining to leadership, cooperation, trust, tolerance, civility, and self-reliance should be developed through practice in school and in the community outside the school. Methods of cooperative learning and service learning can be employed to teach the skills and virtues needed for effective operation of civil society organizations. Cooperative learning, students working together in small groups for their mutual benefit, has become a common practice in American classrooms (Stahl and VanSickle 1992). And, service learning, students acting together to learn by doing good for their community, has become a trend in civic education (MacNichol 1993). Further, a National Service Learning Cooperative Clearinghouse was established recently at the University of Minnesota to monitor and promote teaching and learning that connects meaningful community service by students with academic achievement, personal growth, and civic responsibility. So, there are very positive trends in American education today that emphasize development of skills

and virtues needed for participation in civil society.

A renewal of emphasis on civil society in civic education cannot insure a revival of civil society in American life. It is only one necessary action, among others, which we Americans must take in behalf of democracy in order to continue its consolidation in the United States of America and elsewhere. America's status as the world's oldest and most successful democracy is no guarantee that it will continue to be an exemplary political system. There is no doubt, however, that a vibrant civil society is an essential element of democracy and freedom that must be conserved and nurtured if we would have a chance to sustain our civic heritage. So, if we Americans would sustain a healthy constitutional democracy in the twenty-first century, we must teach our students how to maintain and improve civil society. They must know what it is, how it is connected to constitutional democracy, how to participate responsibly and effectively within it, and why it is good.

Notes

1 Civil society is not included in the indexes of prominent late twentieth-century works on the idea of democracy, such as Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* and Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy.*

2 Civil society is the main theme of eight articles in the 1996 issues of the quarterly publication *Journal of Democracy.* Further, several important books on civil society have been published during the post five years, such as *The Idea of Civil Society* by Adam B. Seligman, *Civil Society: Theory, History, and Comparison,* edited by John A. Hall, and *Civil Society and*

Political Theory, edited by Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato. Further, an eighteenth-century classic, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* by Adam Ferguson, was newly published in 1995 by Transaction Publishers. These prominent publications are indicators of high current interest in the idea of civil society.

3 The celebrated two-volume work of Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, published in 1835 and 1840 and continuously in print since then, drew widespread attention to the operations of civil society as a key factor in the development and maintenance of a healthy democracy in tandem with personal liberty.

4 John J. Patrick was a member of the Planning Committee that created the framework for the 1998 NAEP civics assessment. He currently is one of several consultants to the Educational Testing Service in this project to develop the test items for the 1998 NAEP civics assessment. Thus, he has been in a position to know in detail the content of the framework and test items for the upcoming NAEP civics assessment.

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John J. Patrick is Director of the Social Studies Development Center, Director of the ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, and Professor of Education at Indiana University. Since 1991, he has traveled many times to Central and Eastern Europe to participate in civic education projects and conferences. He has been to Poland six times, to Latvia five times, to Estonia four times, to the Czech Republic three times, and to Romania one time. He has authored many publications on different aspects of democratic theory and civic education. Among his recent publications are "Principles of Democracy for the Education of Citizens in Former Communist Countries of Central and Eastern Europe," in *Building Civic Education for Democracy in Poland* edited by Richard C. Remy and Jacek Strzemieczny and "Constitutionalism in Education for Democracy," in *Can Democracy Be Taught?* edited by Andrew Oldenquist.

See the Photograph on the Next Page

Caption for photograph: On August 27, 1996, Professor John J. Patrick of Indiana University (center) visited the NGO Center in Riga, Latvia to inquire about civil society and non-governmental organizations in the Baltic region. At one side of Professor Patrick is Guntars Catlaks, President of the Democracy Advancement Center (a non-governmental organization in Riga). At Professor Patrick's other side is Helle Williamsen, President of the NGO Center of Riga. According to Ms. Williamsen there are more than 1,600 registered NGO's in Latvia.

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