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Amitai Etzioni

An Introduction

Translated by Morgan Hangartner

1. From Cologne to Israel and on to Washington: Etzioni's Journey

Amitai Etzioni was born in Cologne, Germany on January 4, 1929. His birth name was Werner Falk. After a number of detours, he and his parents managed to immigrate to Palestine in 1936. In Palestine he grew up on a cooperative settlement (Moshav), became a young socialist and joined the social democratic MAPAI party. In 1946 he dropped out of school and joined the underground resistance movement

against the mandatory power of the British. The resistance primarily entailed bombings of British police stations and the smuggling of illegal immigrants from Europe into Palestine. During the 1948 Israeli War of Independence he became a soldier. But when the army discharged him in 1950 he was not able to gain admittance to a university because he did not have a high school degree. With Martin Buber as his teacher, he completed courses for future adult school instructors. Buber had a significant influence upon him. In fact, Etzioni later described his communitarian ideas as a modernized version of Buber's dialogical principle. Therefore Etzioni's relationship to Martin Buber is discussed in the second chapter of this book, which maps the intellectual history of Etzioni's ideas.

Following the completion of his one-year program with Buber, Etzioni decided to take up academic studies after all. After completing his M.A., Etzioni spent a year abroad in the USA, a requisite amongst members of Israel's academic elite. He studied at that University of California, Berkeley and received a post as a Sociologist at Columbia University in New York a year later. He has lived in the US ever since and experienced the protest movements of the 1960s at their focal point. In 1964 he published his first article against the Vietnam War in the Washington Post. His activities did not have any serious personal consequences. But he did have to cover his own costs during his first lecture tour in Germany in the 1960s. Years later, when he was able to look into his FBI file, he found out that the FBI kept others from hanging up posters for his speech in Frankfurt's *Amerikahaus*. As a result, his audience in Frankfurt was not very large. His name also appeared on a blacklist that ensured that the government would not pay for his traveling abroad to give speeches.

Activists such as the feminist Betty Friedan and the ecologist Rachel Carson, as well as the consumer advocate and lawyer Ralph Nader, have left a lasting impression upon him. He sees academic life – especially his tenure, which he received very early in his career – as an important chance to make good use of his freedom of speech. Essentially, he believes that practical activities are not mere distractions, but instead enrich and stimulate his own theories. In 1968 he published a book entitled "The Active Society," in which he presents an extensive theory on social and political processes. Etzioni continues to consider "The Active Society," which he dedicated to "the active ones," his best work to date. As a result of his political engagement, Etzioni became a public figure. He even published his books in Germany, where his studies in peace theory were especially popular. In these books he advocates – in light

of the atomic threat – a strategy of gradual, unilateral arms reductions that would build a relationship of trust with the other side.

His fundamental intellectual concept is based on the combination of sound science with the demands of political activity – simple dichotomies and one-factor-theories are anathema to him. Although the understanding of graduation, nuances and subtle differentiation is an essential element of all scientific methodology, a television audience is relatively intolerant of complicated, differentiated positions. Etzioni suspects that this intolerance is the reason why his gradualist disarmament and peace theories were not able to achieve their full potential, even though they accompanied the disarmament debates for a while. As a realist he is aware that complex explanations often taken on an underdog position in relation to one-factor-theories. To meet the challenge posed by simpler theories it is therefore important to sure up complex arguments while formulating them in an accessible manner. This requires constant public presence and a lot of practice. But public presence can, in turn, damage one's academic reputation. Etzioni is sure that this is a risk that must one must take. He is also certain that one should not make the assumption that one is too good for what his academic teacher Robert Merton refers to disparagingly as "social work."[1]

The wide array of topics that Etzioni has dealt with in his books includes gene technology and the moral issues surrounding the study of economics. He also founded the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE) in 1989. By founding the SASE, Etzioni hoped to strengthen socio-economics as an academic discipline. He also saw the SASE as a way of countering exclusively neo-liberal approaches to the field of economics. Etzioni has successfully achieved both of these goals. Members of SASE include not only Nobel Prize winners such as Amartya Sen, but economists such as Herbert Simon, Arthur Lewis and Albert Hirschman as well.

Certainly his most important initiative was the foundation of the communitarian network and the organization of a communitarian platform. With a network and a platform Etzioni was able to add a political dimension to what was initially a purely academic criticism of both excessively atomistic individualism and

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[1] Regarding this cf. Etzioni, Amitai, "Facing the Slings and Arrows. Personal Reflections on a Life of Social Activism" in: idem, *A Responsive Society. Collected Essays on guiding deliberate Social Change*, San Francisco/Oxford 1991, pp. 3-20.

liberalism. At the same time, organization fostered groupings, self-reflection, and the worldwide diffusion of ideas which were previously limited to vague longings borne by sophisticated philosophical works. In the spirit of Martin Buber's dialogical principle, Etzioni managed to synthesize liberalism and communitarian thought through open, worldwide discussions. In so doing he was also able to move from the traditional standoff between "Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft" towards a new integrative concept – communitarian liberalism.

Etzioni's has worked as a theorist, researcher, and political advisor, and has even developed his own political strategies. Only a few social scientists have been as active as Etzioni in all four of these fields. He follows in the footsteps of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim, all three of whom were not just theorists, but were also able – although each in his own manner – to act as polemics and political activists. In important sections of his earlier works, Etzioni responds to the theorists mentioned above and debates Talcott Parsons' social theory. In America's academic world, Etzioni now has a level of stature comparable with Robert K. Merton's reputation in the nineteen fifties and sixties, or that of James Coleman in the nineteen eighties.[2]

What distinguishes Etzioni from Max Weber and the Frankfurt School under Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno is his resistance towards all pathos or disillusionment. He rejects any heroic attempt to accept social isolation and the bureaucratized world as the price of modernity, because this attitude only leads to empty complaints instead of meaningful political activities. Characteristic of Etzioni is his specific optimism, which allows him to believe in the usefulness of theoretical and organizational resistance against the mainstream. In this sense and despite the fact that he has lived on three different continents, Etzioni has become a typical American. Instead of being demoralized by the power of the market and the state, Etzioni places faith in the citizen's practical abilities of self-organization. Etzioni counterposes the failures of the market and the state by pointing to a third social sector, the communitarian society. Even in his first important book on social theory, "The Active Society" from 1968, Etzioni formulates this goal of societal guidance. The

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[2] Cf. Sciulli, David, "Introduction: By Etzioni. Theory, Research, and Policy" in: idem (ed.), *Macro Socio-Economics. From Theory to Activism*, New York/London 1996, pp. 3-12.

comprehensive social theory he presents in the context of this book deserves a closer look and will be discussed in chapter 3.

Since writing "The Active Society," Etzioni has worked on the practical and theoretical implications societal coherence. An emphasis on communities causes us to pose the following question: Don't communities tend to emphasize particular value judgments, which then become more important than universal moral norms? Does this leave room for cultural relativism? This question – the basic problem that all communitarian thinkers must face – will be dealt with in chapters 4 and 5. Finally, the communitarian program and its practical uses will be presented in chapter 6. But we must also remember that Etzioni is a scientist of unusual breadth. Therefore we must briefly discuss at least two other topics: Etzioni's critique of economic neo-liberalism, an ideology to which he would like to add a moral dimension by developing a new theoretical framework; socio-economic and his gradualist theory, which describes how victories could be achieved without resorting to warfare. In fact, in 1964 Etzioni used this theory to create a plan for the end of the Cold War – a plan that was dramatically confirmed, if not in every detail, in 1989.

2. Intellectual Influences: Martin Buber

During a speech in Freiburg, Germany in 1997, Amitai Etzioni referred to the fact that his ideas actually shouldn't be all that foreign to a German audience. Nor, he remarked, should his ideas seem very American. In fact, both linguistically and culturally the intellectual heritage of Etzioni's ideas rests upon two German sources: Ferdinand Tönnies' *Community and Society* (1887) as well as the philosophy of Martin Buber (1878-1965).

The theoretical differentiation between the terms community (*Gemeinschaft*) and society (*Gesellschaft*) is most precise and refined in German sociology, especially in the works of Ferdinand Tönnies. For Tönnies, the most important elements of community are the family, neighbors and friendship. Tönnies systematically links these three potential elements of community to three social milieus: the home, the

village and the small town.[3] Characteristic of community structures are "reciprocal, common and binding convictions – the self-will of a community, which, in this case, should be considered consensus. This is the singular social force, and source of sympathy, that holds people together as members of a collective whole."[4] Society, on the other hand, is a group of people who live and work together peacefully, but are still "fundamentally divided."[5] Societies are built on a contract. They exist first and foremost in large cities, but are also present in nation-states, which superimpose themselves upon, and displace, regional identities. Society is based upon the notion that each person is every other person's enemy (Hobbes' "homo homini lupus"). Community on the other hand is based on the idea of an organic and active social life (Aristotle's concept of man as a political being). Modern sociology tries to prevent this conflict from being reduced into a quarrel over two categories and avoids using these two terms (both of which have a long and heavily debated intellectual history) because of their reputed "imprecision." Sociologists replace the terms *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* with ersatz categories such as "primary group" or "intimate group."[6] But these new categories have encouraged sociologists to avoid fundamental discussions. Thus, many have interpreted the communitarian thought of Etzioni and others as a new and lively approach to relevant sociological problems.

Martin Buber's most important work, *Paths in Utopia* (1947), presents utopian-socialist and anarchistic thought from a religious perspective. The book's primary argument refers back to Ferdinand Tönnies: The medieval city is the classical example of an organic community, which is held together by common labor and commonly held mores and beliefs; the modern metropolis is representative of a society based on managed separation, which is founded on force, contract, convention and public opinion. Buber, especially in his criticism of the atomization and

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[3] Cf. Tönnies, Ferdinand: *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Community and society): Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie. Darmstadt, 1988 (first published in 1887), I, § 6, §§ 14-18. Cf. as well: Freyer, Hans: *Soziologie als Wirklichkeitswissenschaft. Logische Grundlegung des Systems der Soziologie*. Leipzig/Berlin, 1930, pp. 240-252.

[4] Ibid. p.17, § 9 [Passage translated by M.H.]

[5] Ibid. p. 34, §19 [Passage translated by M.H.]

[6] Cf. with this connotation for example: Hartfiel, Günter/Hillmann, Karl-Heinz, *Wörterbuch der Soziologie*, 3rd Edition, Stuttgart 1982, pp. 244 and following.

amorphization of modern life through the dismantling of various forms of community, anticipated much of modern communitarian critique. The term "atomization" belongs to the essential repertoire of a communitarian's social criticism. The first to make use of the term was Georg Simmel in his book, *The Philosophy of Money*. But even Hegel referred to isolated individuals as social atoms.[7]

Of course, Buber certainly did not want to return to the Middle Ages, even if both he and the "German youth movement" (during the first half of the 20th Century) were accused of this again and again. He wanted to bring together ideas of community and socialism. Therefore, intellectually he identified himself with the traditions of socialist Zionism. Zionists, who were primarily influenced by the ideas of East European Jews, wanted to create an ideal communal cooperative in Palestine. And, initially, with the foundation of the Kibbutzim, they even came very close to achieving this goal.

In the words of Martin Buber: "What counts is liberating true life between people. What matters is the rebirth of the community – the local community, the association, comradeship, and religious unification. […] Only the community, not the state, can become the rightful focus of community property – not the state, but the association the rightful focus of common production. New customs (*Sitten*) can only develop in comradeship, not in society – not in the church, but only in brotherhoods can new faith flourish."[8]

These sentences embody the entire range of Buber's vision. It is socialistic, but opposes state-socialism. It is religious, but opposes organized religion. It is moralistic, but opposes a formal legal system. His vision is a search for commonalities, but on a voluntary basis. Commonalities should also be based on emotions, not rational choice (i.e. the community should be placed ahead of material interests). Buber rejects collectivism because it simply places one individual next to another and leads to an organized loss of personal identity. True community is not

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[7] Cf. for example Hegel, G.W.F.: *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Elements of the philosophy of right) in: idem, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, edited by Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus, Bd. 7, Frankfurt/M. 1986, p. 439, 476.

[8] Buber, Martin: *Pfade in Utopia* (Paths in Utopia): *Über Gemeinschaft und deren Verwirklichung*, 3. Aufl., Heidelberg, 1985, p. 272 and following pages. [Passage translated by M.H.]

based on human juxtaposition, but on interaction between many different people.[9] Community demands spontaneity instead of contracts and interests, and in religious terms it requires Hasidism (enthusiasm, ecstasy, and mysticism) instead of organized religion. After publishing "*Tales of the Hasidim*" and the "*Ecstatic confessions*," Buber took on an important role in the continued commemoration of Europe's tradition of ecstatic intellectualism. For example, Buber's books had a lasting effect on Robert Musil and influenced important sections of his book, "*The man without qualities*." Buber's influence was especially significant during the nineteen fifties and sixties, when people in Europe were not as oriented towards Far Eastern mysticism and ecstasy as they are today. Buber's works, and certainly his personality and self-presentation as well, filled a gap in the spiritual existences of many people.

Buber, whose socialistic Zionism was stable and very serious in nature, was sincerely interested in cooperation and rapprochement with the Arabs living in Palestine. The same cannot be said of the pragmatic politics of Ben Gurion and Golda Meir, even though working-class Zionism significantly influenced their politics as well. Despite fervent resistance and hostility in Israel, Buber was continuously supportive of cooperation with Arabs. But he was also never responsible for every-day politics, decisions regarding war and peace, or the decision to capitulate or defend.

Therefore his texts are full of an exuberance that is markedly absent in modern American communitarianism. Even though many communtarians – e.g. Robert Bellah – consider questions of religious community, they do so as sociologists; factually, analytically, and without the solemn tone that is present in Buber's works. In 1919, Buber's works still include exuberant formulations such as the following, "People who desire community, desire God. All desire for true attachment is directed towards God as well; and all desire for God is directed towards true community."[10]

Martin Buber's intellectual development is typically portrayed as a transition from a mystical towards a dialogical level – see for example Abraham Schapira.[11] The element of subjective mysticism recedes and the spirit of self-realization is transferred

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[9] Cf. ibid, p. 298 and following pages.

[10] Ibid. p. 278. [Passage translated by M.H.]

[11] Cf. Schapira, Abraham, Epilogue in Buber, Martin: *Pfade in Utopia*, loc. cit., p. 425.

into a realization of life within a perfect community: a community in which every member holds responsibility – a collaboratively crafted utopian polis.[12] The passage above, from 1919, marks Buber's transition. In this citation we can also see that the self-realization pathos is transferred directly into politics, which, as a result, takes on utopian-collaborative characteristics. It was also always important for Buber that his concept of community rest upon immediate personal relations – and the social orders that they produce – instead of being built upon a massive, mechanical clustering of people. He is critical of state-socialism, because he considers it senseless. To try and overcome the atomization and amorphousness of life by "lending the mechanism of the state an all encompassing power"[13] merely leads to the opposite of the desired effect. But Buber does not reject society in toto; he rejects its atomization – a fact that, although it is touched upon in *Paths in Utopia*, is plain to see in what is certainly his most famous work, *I and Thou*. Gustav Landauer's anarchism certainly influenced Buber's principal distrust of social order and state-centrism, as well as his preference for personal relationships. But these elements of Buber's intellectual thought are also reminiscent of the American practice of community building. The supporters of this practice are deeply mistrustful of the concentration of political power in Washington and feel a genuine sense of trust by means of personal exchange alone.

One must conclude that the utopianism of both Landauer and Buber has failed in all regards. The reasons for this failure lie in an unrealizable demand, which Buber phrased as follows: "So that this shall all be realized, people and groups of people must relinquish many private advantages and privileges for the sake of the community, and must order all of their abilities so that they are in accordance with the common economy; in so doing they will achieve something unheard of: people and groups of people will yearn for the community with all of the strength that their souls may posses."[14] Apparently, this resolve can only be expected of a limited number of people for a short period of time. People with the necessary strength of character set up religious orders or establish Kibbutzim, which may last on for one or two generations. But history shows that the enthusiasm for such collectives diminishes

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[12] Cf. ibid, p. 428.

[13] Ibid, p. 435. [Passage translated by M.H.]

[14] Buber, Martin: *Pfade in Utopia*, loc. cit., p. 274. [Passage translated by M.H.]

with time, while processes of institutionalization tend to alter the essential nature of the projects themselves.

Attempts to force such structures upon larger groups of people by means of strict central planning only lead to revolutionary or Stalinist terror. Such nightmares are the downside of forced togetherness and have led to the repeated discrediting of communitarian thought. The sorry reputation of communitarian ideas has led many to support more liberal positions such as those held by Ralf Dahrendorf. Polemically opposed to Martin Buber, Dahrendorf no longer searches for paths into, but paths out of utopia and considers modern communitarianism little more than tribalism.

This leads us to pose two questions: 1. In terms of intellectual history, which category does communitarian thought fit into? Should it be considered revolutionary, as it has understood itself to be not only in its socialistic and anarchistic but in its fascist variations as well, or should it be considered regressive? Must criticisms of modern atomism and individualism necessarily lead us to concur with the reserved responses of Max Weber and Talcott Parson, according to whom atomism and individualism are the unavoidable prices we pay for modernity and freedom? Or is it perhaps still possible to introduce elements of volunteer community building into liberal societies rather than simply granting the state the task of creating and regulating interpersonal organizations?

Starting from a modern perspective, Etzioni reflected critically upon the social philosophy of Martin Buber. He also reevaluated his own relationship to Buber. By juxtaposing his own reserved sociological approach with Buber's excessive social philosophy, Etzioni makes it clear how short minded and superficial many polemics against communitarian thought tended to be. These critics often described communitarian thought as being tribal, though they themselves could not distinguish between Buber's Jewish Kibbutz-communitarianism and the pseudo-communitarian ideology of the Nazis.

Relationships, not people, are the starting points of Buber's social philosophy. His philosophy is concerned with I and thou, which is the title of his most well-known book.[15] For Buber, relationships are a question of fate, history and culture, and are certainly not the products of personal choice, contract, or exchange that all new social philosophy would have them be. Buber advocates a holistic approach that places

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[15] Cf. idem: *Ich und Du* (I and Thou), 11. Aufl., Heidelberg, 1983.

individuals into close relations with others. Etzioni criticizes this approach because it omits a sociological consideration of the structures of society and We. Basically, a relationship to a community is understood in a personalistic manner, making it a large I-and-thou relationship.

For this reason, Etzioni developed an independent variation of Buber's intellectual thought. He speaks of an I-We-relationship and adds an essential question that was completely foreign to Buber: How can an individual protect himself against complete absorption in, or submersion by, We? Earlier communitarians never dealt with this problem.

Buber developed a somewhat mythically excessive definition of dialogue. For him, a dialogue may also be realized by means of the understanding that is achieved with a mere glance, or even a person's opening-up without any sort of communication. Buber considers dialogue a "genuine conversation," meaning that monologues, non-authentic dialogues and strategic negotiations of contract theory do not qualify. Nor does Buber consider technical dialogues genuine conversations, as these are merely a result of the need to understand something objectively. Instead of being limited to a person's intellectual-self, Buber would like dialogues to always incorporate a person's entire being. From Etzioni's point of view, such dialogues correspond to the communitarian definition of a values-dialogue. But here he also makes an important qualification: If a person's entire being is involved, there is always the risk that "dialogues will at first become clashes between cultures and then civil wars" (BU 30).[16]

Like every communitarian, Buber must distinguish between different forms of community. He differentiates between collectives and instrumental groupings, as well as inauthentic and authentic communities. In accordance with the youth movement tradition, he also refers to the latter as leagues (*Bünde*), which, especially in their German variation, served as important examples for the Zionist youth.

Buber rejects collectivism and individualism alike – the former because it treats humans as if they are simply parts of something larger, the latter because it reflects an understanding of only a small aspect of human existence. Neither is able to reach an understanding of the totality of human existence. One could even argue that collectivism does not see humans at all; it only sees the group. Individualism, on the

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[16] Translation by M.H.

other hand, sees only the relationship that individuals have with themselves. For Buber instrumental groupings are parties and interest groups. True communities are unions in which, at least temporarily, the correct balance between I-and-you elements can be achieved. Here Etzioni recognizes the ecstatic Dionysian in Buber's work, the moment when community is achieved. Buber preaches about immediateness in relations, but also warns against excessive leagues, as these can only be maintained momentarily, during revolutionary or religious movements. Etzioni's advice is much more deliberate: "It is best for communities when they avoid becoming leagues, as these tend to evolve into cults, militias, or equally instable groups, which, even if they began as charitable, egalitarian communes, often become autocratic or suppressive" (BU 45).[17]

Etzioni's communitarian thought is much more civil than Martin Buber's eccentric, ecstatic, and in many ways resolutely anti-bourgeois prophecies. As Etzioni sees it, Buber is in line with the traditions of the older communitarians who had "no term for individual rights, which could serve as counterparts to the demand for social responsibility," and would therefore fail the "litmus test for new, responsive communitarians" (BU 49).[18]

Another objection to Buber's intellectual thought is that it is markedly distant towards normative considerations. Buber certainly celebrates the participation of a person's entire being in the I-Thou-relationship. But this is not a normative position, and is therefore not a moral position either – it is a posture based on intensity. "His position is basically uncritical" (BU 35)[19] because he distinguishes between communities based on levels of intensity, not according to their moral worth. Therefore he cannot ask whether league-based community building is really desirable and realizable. The differentiation and moral judgment of community-building – from the perspective of an all-encompassing community of communities (see chapters 4 and 5 of this book) – is an achievement of modern communitarian thought, which cannot fall back on Buber and older communitarian traditions. Even Buber's God seems to be a non-normative God who is "eternal, essential, and joyful" "but without

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[17] Idem.

[18] Idem.

[19] Idem.

a moral essence" (BU 54).[20] Despite all of Buber's preachy, visionary self-presentation, an essential critical element is missing that would make it possible to draw moral distinctions. Buber's God is one who, in the end, accepts everyone without making each person accountable for his or her actions.

The new communitarian thought on the other hand emphasizes the importance of society as an intermediary sphere between the state and the market that guides itself by means of civil norms and mores, and supplements state laws by acting as a source of order and stability. Laws, which must be enforced by law, are not enough; laws must be supported by a social-moral foundation. Sometimes this social-moral foundation may come into conflict with formal laws – as was the case with outdated legal paragraphs, such as those supporting segregation laws in the South in the nineteen sixties. A modern example of this potential conflict are traffic stops, which leave many to wonder whether they serve the prevention of accidents, or are simply a means of collecting fines, the latter of which would make them illegitimate encroachments on personal freedom.

This critical discussion of Martin Buber's works has made it clear that modern, communitarian thought takes on the hopes and aspirations that are present in traditional communitarian dreams, but is much less receptive towards Martin Buber's utopian socialism. Most importantly, much more emphasis is placed on individual rights. In all fairness, Buber also renounced emotionless collectivism. But, as a sociologist, Etzioni has taken the arguments that were earlier presented in a utopian and emphatic manner, and has brought them to a level that is compatible with a modern, liberal society. In this process he has added a whole new dimension to communitarian thought.

3. The Intellectual Outcome of 1968: The Active Society

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[20] Idem.

Etzioni's monumental work from 1968, *The Active Society*, includes the following dedication, "For the Active Ones. In particular my students at Columbia and at Berkeley."[21] At this time Etzioni taught at both of these universities, the veritable epicenters of the student protests against the Vietnam War and for the civil rights of blacks. This book was a product of practical experience and was designed for practical application. But when reading this book, one also notices that it is a highly theoretical plea for bottom-up social self-regulation or, as Etzioni called it, "societal guidance." Activity entails engaged, self-determined and energetic action.

A whole string of social scientists lauded Etzioni's book. In fact, Dieter Senghaas went into raptures over the book in the *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, an academic journal for political scientists: There is hardly another social scientist who has attempted something similar, namely "the formulation of a macro-sociological theory of social and political processes." According to Senghaas, Etzioni had managed to join instrumental-organizational rationalism with elements of practical reason such as the rights of the majority, real-life experiences and emancipation. Most importantly, his work was of great significance because it presented a general theory that meets the highest academic and intellectual standards.[22]

But within the international student movement, this book never reached the level of significance that was accorded to books such as Herber Marcuses *Eros and Civilization* or Daniel Cohn-Bendit's political pamphlet on left-wing radicalism. There were a number of reasons for this. In many ways, Etzioni's book was very much ahead of its time. Etzioni had left classical modernization theory behind and felt that Western societies were experiencing a "transition from the modern to the post-modern period" (AS 9). Etzioni was the first social scientist to use the term "Postmodern" – eleven years before Jean-François Lyotard, whose book *La Condition Postmoderne* made the use of this term a perfectly apt way of diagnosing the times.[23] His thesis is founded on the fact that modern societies are knowledge-based, which leads Etzioni to make two observations. That the effects of natural and social sciences

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[21] Etzioni, Amitai: The Active Society. A Theory of Societal and Political Processes, New York und London 1968.

[22] Cf. Senghaas, Dieter: "Apathie oder Aktivität. Etzionis Theorie politischen Handelns" in *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 10. Jg., 1969, p. 118, p. 128.

[23] Cf. Reese-Schäfer: *Walter, Lyotard zur Einführung*, 3. Aufl., Hamburg 1995.

on social processes must be re-evaluated, and that the role of science as a means of social regulation must increasingly become the focus of research efforts. From this point of view the role of intellectuals in the political processes of postmodern societies is an essential research topic.

The second reason for the *Active Society's* lack of effectiveness was that its socio-technological side was overemphasized. For example, in the German translation "societal guidance" is translated as "*gesamtgesellschaftliche Steuerung*" (macro-social control). Accordingly, in Germany's Federal Chancellery, at the beginning of Helmut Schmidt's term of office, an attempt was made to put an Etzioni-based social theory to practical use – an absolute misunderstanding. This attempt failed of course, even if some of the political scientists involved continue to look back at this period with a degree of pride.

But let's begin by mapping the structure of the arguments in Etzioni's work. In no way does Etzioni take an uncritical view of the idea of activism itself. He notes that even Mussolini propagated an ideology of activity and nearly saw this as the essence of fascism. (AS 12) As soon as it is ideologized, activism has the dangerous potential of growing into an anti-intellectual and anti-ethical force. Etzioni insists on a reflexive and moral self-control of all practical orientations. Without obligation and consciousness, "action becomes a blind, brute force." (AS 12).

Nevertheless, activity fulfills an important social function: it is the opposite of lip service and representation by others. In general "an active society, one in which all major groups actively participate in public life, is a society whose values are more fully realized than those of less active ones." (AS 12). Ideally, social activity causes a society to pay more attention to the needs of its members. A repressive society on the other hand promotes passivity and the forced mobilization of its members. At this point in Etzioni's work we find his first reference to the term "responsiveness," which at that time was still translated into German as "*bedürfnisorientiert* (needs-oriented)." Then, the academic term responsivity gradually began to establish itself. The term is only indirectly related to the word needs, as these can also be decreed and manipulated from above in a paternalistic and solicitous manner. A society or organization is responsive when it is capable of reacting sensitively to the demands of its members – just as the motor of a car can be considered responsive when it reacts to the smallest movement of the gas pedal.

The active society, which has emancipated itself from passivity that is forced upon it from above, is in no way intended as a relapse into a pseudo-community. Nor is it to become the concretized fighting organization, envisioned by groups of Leninist activists, which is only open to a chosen few. The members of an active society should, in accordance with Immanuel Kant, treat each other as ends and not means. It is important to realize values without objectifying people as state-socialist and theocratic societies normally do. Etzioni rejects all mass mobilizations that are centrally planned or based on blind faith.

The active society is also built upon a social contract. But because this contract must be dynamic, a normative and political consensus that is subject to change is also necessary. In this process social science has the task of evaluating normative relations, exploring alternatives, and clarifying fundamental value systems in order to make these more realistic and lasting.

"The weaker intellectually the social sciences and the more hidden […] their normative implications, the more utopian, erratic, and short-lived will be society's and their active orientation." (AS 15). In this statement Etzioni quite precisely anticipated several of the undesirable trends that came into being in the 1970s. His perspective is twofold and occupies an intermediate sphere that lies between both political science and sociology. As a sociologist he observes society as an object of transformation. As a political scientist he focuses on the subject that maintains an active orientation. "Our study systematically combines these two perspectives: It is the exploration of a society that knows itself, is committed to moving toward a fuller realization of its values, that commands the levers such transformation requires, and is able to set limits on its capacity for self-alteration – lest it become self-mutilation. This would be an active society." (AS 16).

In a knowledge-community, activation opens up entirely new perspectives. The laws of scarcity apply to the distribution of goods, but they do not apply to the distribution of knowledge – a factor that supports the internet-economy. A worldwide increase in knowledge capacities and the potential for self-organization is possible. Like all other postmodern theorists, Etzioni recognized early on – in the nineteen sixties to be exact – which basic conditions are necessary in a knowledge-based society.

His approach is based on a theory of action that relates back to Aristotle. He rejects a purely individualistic theory, as a We-feeling is characteristic of all human

groups and precedes the individualistic self (AS 23). At any rate, the sphere of action does not exist in personal, but in social projects. The unit that can be the carrier of activity – sometimes the individual, but usually the group – always forms the starting point of the theory of activity. This sort of action theory is free of an egocentric view of the world, but is also free of a collectivist curtailment. As in the case of Aristotle, there is a hierarchy of existences: at the bottom end there is lifeless matter, at the next level the movable and perceptive animal world, and at the very top are the humans – beings capable of creating symbols. Accordingly, we can draw up a ranking of malleability. The creation of symbols is almost completely free of constraints, whereas natural objects are largely given. Action lies between these two as an intermediary force. The three primary intellectual disciplines – the philosophical, social and natural sciences – orient themselves according to this continuum of symbols, action, and objects. Humans of course exist in all three spheres and are subject to the individual dynamics of each sphere. The relationships between symbols are free of the scarcity that is a central attribute of the world that obeys mechanical logic.

Etzioni does not believe that a return to the grand theories of the pre-sociological age is possible. He simply believes that it would be useful to establish a new type of sub-discipline within the social sciences: macro-sociology. The subject matter of macro-sociology would be society in its totality – its individual elements as well as the ever-changing relations between the elements themselves (AS 41). Etzioni was far ahead of his time in the case of this subject matter as well. In academic discussions serious efforts to tackle the issue of a post-Parsonian macro-sociology have only recently come to the fore – largely as a result of Luhmann's theory of social systems, which increased interest in, and respect for, macro-sociology.[24]

Etzioni criticizes three essential social science approaches, each of which he considers problematic: 1. the atomistic (rational choice theory, individualistic economics), 2. the collectivistic (system theory) and 3. the volunteeristic enlightenment, utopian socialism). Atomism interprets processes as unwanted consequences of mechanical relations between many individuals. Collectivism or

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[24] Cf. as well: Adloff, Frank: "Kollektive Akteure und gesamtgesellschaftliches Handeln: Amitai Etzionis Beitrag zur Makrosoziologie" in *Soziale Welt*, 50. Jg., 1999, p. 149-168.

holism sees overall social circumstances as the product of quasi-organic relationships between elements of a social whole. Voluntarism, lastly, views the entire social condition as an expression of a large, uniform will or consciousness (AS 61).

Atomism does not allow for an active orientation, because it attributes activities to microscopic actors only. Collectivists view relationships between the forces of the social whole as given. Furthermore, collectivists believe that only historical, cultural or exogenous influences – over which the collective has no control – can change relationships between social forces. Both are prone to conservative political association. Voluntarism on the other hand is nearly hyperactive and hardly recognizes boundaries at all.

Etzioni considers this list logically complete, as there are no other possibilities. Therefore one must think in terms of combinations in order to find a satisfying theory and avoid the problems posed by the three orientations listed above. In this manner a convergence of collectivism and voluntarism is achieved, to which an atomistic model – that can be applied to a subgroup of social characteristics and processes – is added (AS 62). In turn, this amalgamation yields Etzioni's theory of "societal guidance," social self-regulation.

Contrary to the assumption of the individualistic decision theory, large collectives such as labor unions, armies, or states clearly *are* capable of acting as a whole, as this does not require a great deal of agreement. Furthermore, a collective can learn more rapidly than an individual can – "it usually has a longer life span, it often has more assets, and – especially when it commands an organizational network – it can more readily change parts than a person can restructure his personality, not to mention his body." (AS 72). Therefore a collective can form an appropriate basis for voluntary action. Such units are usually the focus of political science, which concentrates on states rather than societies, administrations rather than informal organizations, parties rather than ethic groups or classes, and voting patterns rather than interaction.

But because overall social relations place limits on macro-action, the sociological perspective must be considered as well. As Etzioni sees it, there are three basic types of social relations, which are therefore control mechanisms as well. They are based on: 1. force (coercive relations), 2. usefulness (utilitarian relations), and 3. norms (normative relations) (AS 96). Usually actual relations are based on a mixture of these factors, but as a rule, one of these factors usually predominates. Etzioni has

studied this process by analyzing the integration of states and state communities. In the long run, maintaining the use of force and conquest is difficult without the addition of utilitarian and, as soon as possible, normative relations. One important reason why America's occupation policy was so successful in Germany after 1945 was that it managed to anchor its own norms. Force without a normative basis tends to be ineffective, and may even cause significant damage without producing the desired bonding-effect. On the other hand, the most intimate and sturdiest type of cooperation can come into being if normative relations are present; at least when such cooperation is strengthened by the addition of usefulness and, if absolutely necessary, a degree of force. Having said that, we should also take into consideration the fact that "force" ought to be a product of internalized and established normative structures.

Even large organizations can be classified according to these three types of social relations. It is important to keep this in mind so that one does not fall victim to the naïve notion that classes or ethnic groups "demand" or "do" things. The class or ethnic group itself does not act. It is each particular large organization – with its role as spokesperson – that responds and reacts to members in a varying, and often fully inadequate, manner. Prisons provide an extreme example of this principle: If traditional penitentiaries emphasize an almost exclusive use of coercive means, they do not need the participation of prisoners to function effectively (AS 104).

The overall normative goal of Etzioni's active society theory is to overcome alienation and inauthenticity by making society more responsive towards the needs of its members (AS 618-619). The alienating structure is the product of modernity with its three characteristics: industrialization, bureaucratization, and rationality as the priority of instrumental reason. The postmodern society has become talented in generating a manipulative false consciousness. This talent stems from postmodern society's previously non-existent, but now quite far-reaching, capacity to make people believe that it behaves responsively – even in areas where this is not the case.

According to Etzioni, alienation is in essence "the unresponsiveness of the world to the actor, which subjects him to forces he neither comprehends nor guides." (AS 618). "The concept of alienation does not assume that the alienated are aware of their condition. It is a concept of the critical intellectual and the social scientist." (AS 618). But the degree of alienation at hand can be measured empirically, and it is also possible to inform others of the issues surrounding alienation. "The passively alienated tend to be apathetic; the actively alienated tend to be mobilized but

obsessive in their conduct." (AS 619). Etzioni uses the term "obsessive" to refer to fanatic types of relations, such as those that come into being in extremist movements.

Social inauthenticity follows alienation when a society tries to appear open even though its essential conditions lead to alienation, and parts of the society are excluded. (AS 619). Inauthentic structures use a larger portion of their resources to hide their true character and maintain the appearance of openness. In other words, in a state of classical alienation there is at least a clear and visible enemy. Postmodern inauthenticity on the other hand, places much more emphasis on facades and obscurity (AS 634).

When one uses terms such as "alienation" and "inauthenticity," one implicitly assumes a set of ideas about basic human needs – needs that we can describe as authentic, real and non-alienating. During the nineteen sixties, most critics of alienation left the exact definition of this term up in the air. Etzioni took a chance and wrote up a list of six basic needs and has continued to deal with this subject ever since. These lists continue to be developed as a result of communitarian discussions – especially when these discussions are related to development politics and the fight against poverty and want.[25]

Etzioni does not consider his list from 1968 complete. But he does consider it absolutely essential to continue to encourage and implement systematic research into this field. If it is assumed that people can only ascertain their own happiness, social considerations are termed problematic and are neglected by science as well – despite the fact that needs are implicitly involved in all discussions of topics such as welfare payments, minimum wage, and the duties and obligations of development politics. (AS 624 and following).

The first basic need could be described as the need for attention, as well as solidarity, ties, and love (affection).

The second is the need for acknowledgement, i.e. feelings of self-worth, reward for achievements, or approval (recognition).

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[25] The most thorough analyses are those by the welfare economist Amartya Sen, and those from Martha Nußbaum during her work at the UN's WIDER-Institute in Helsinki. Regarding Nußbaum see: Reese-Schäfer, Walter: *Was ist Kommunitarismus*, 2. Aufl., Frankfurt/M./New York 1995, pp. 106-118.

The third is the need for a context, or orientation, consistency, synthesis, meaning and "wholeness" as well (context).

The fourth is the need for repeated gratification. Long intervals between rewards are frustrating. But, the interval length considered tolerable varies depending on status and culture (repeated gratification).

There is also a need for stability in the pattern of the distribution of rewards. (stability).

Furthermore, there is a need for diversity in social structures, i.e. there must be a variety of social roles, which correspond to a variety of abilities and talents. Both excessive and inadequate support is alienating (variance in social structure).

There can certainly be no social life without a degree of alienation. To a certain degree

satisfaction must be deferred and is a consequence of the requirements of social organization. Complete security and a maximum of attention and recognition are not realistic goals. But the alteration of social arrangements can definitely reduce and restrain the potential for alienation. From the modern, through the late modern, and up into postmodern society, the potential for alienation has continued to increase. This can be measured using social scientific methods. If such measurements were not possible, one would have to abandon the use of "alienation" as a scientific term. Methodically, the costs are best measured by means of comparison. "We find, for example, that systems which allow for no personal achievement – and, hence, frustrate the need for recognition – are so costly that they are unsustainable, such as *austere* communist states, kibbutzim, and other utopian settlements." (AS 629). Clear indicators appear to be delinquency, drug addiction, and other comparable symptoms.

The existence of basic human needs is illustrated by the fact that second generations living in especially alienating societies do not grow accustomed to, and cannot be forced to accept, all aspects of social alienation. Second generations do not fully adapt because there are certain phenomena that no human being will ever accept. "There is nothing in sociological theory or findings of which we are aware to support the notion that a prolonged imposition of a social pattern on a group of men will bring them to adjust their *basic* needs to that pattern. It is in the meeting of these needs that social designing, planning, control, and education encounter ultimate limits within

which they must respond if human costs are to be low – i.e., alienation is to be reduced." (AS 631-632).

The members of postmodern societies have a larger capacity for gratification, but their basic needs are probably the same as those of people who live in primitive societies. Etzioni uses these ideas to counter the arguments of dogmatic historical materialists who assume that human needs are molded by socio-historical conditions alone. To reach this insight a turn in ethnological research was necessary. On the one hand, this turn has helped us learn to see ourselves as primitive. On the other hand, we have learned not to consider people who lived in Stone Age or Bronze Age societies as primitive people, but as people who lived under primitive conditions. Overcoming the racist perspective, especially in ethnographic photography, is an essential part of these efforts.

Postmodern societies are to a large extent inauthentic. Etzioni attributes this more to the inauthenticity of political processes than to other potential factors such as the disintegration of social entities or techno-economic factors. Conspicuous characteristics include relatively high investments in manipulative activities, tensions between ranks and status levels, as well as the inability to mobilize the energy of members in an appropriate manner. Democratic elections are mere illusions if both parties represent the interests of the power elite: "This is somewhat like a town with two newspapers run by one man." (AS 635). Social power then tries its hand at non-institutional expressions; "direct action," unruly strikes, violent clashes, and riots.

In Etzioni's theoretical model, these terms are expressions of alienation. Unlike the anarcho syndicalists, Etzioni does not consider "action directe" a part of the solution; he considers it a sign of the problems that are spurred by democracy's insufficient inclination to revolt and its inadequate ability to self-organize. "The moderate who cannot become enraged about the violation of any value is as much of an anathema to democratic politics as are those who are extremely committed on most issues." (AS 641).

What can one do to counter growing postmodern inauthenticity? Etzioni suggests the mobilization of personal, collective, and macro-social projects. For him the term "project" is a term that is related to existential theories, which – we ought not forget – are extremely voluntary and have represented a posture of resistance towards the bureaucratization of the world since the nineteen forties. An individual projects himself into the world by means of electoral processes and relations, which are his

forms of existence. "An alienated man in the existentialist writings is a man who does not make choices, who evades his responsibility; as we prefer to put it, he is passive and is not engaged in his 'own' projects." (AS 648).

Personal projects are those of self-realization and self-expression, for example the use of art that challenges norms in order to overcome and surmount alienating facades. Most people are so deeply embedded in existing structures that the introduction of transformative collective projects is the concern of only a limited number of activists. Lastly, social movements focus on projects that encompass an entire society. They grow out of the fusion of activated sub-groups, intellectuals, and groups that are both unbalanced and alienated. But activity has a tendency to increase periodically and then decrease, despite the fact that authenticity can only be maintained through continued mobilization. Therefore this type of movement is exposed to regular experiences of disappointment. Still the hope remains that a given phase of completed projects will open up new options and make new opportunities available. "The picture of a revolutionary jump into the euphoria of a fully responsive but static society is, thus, doubly misleading. […] Ultimately, there is no end but rather a continuous drive toward realization." (AS 650). Here it becomes clear how strongly these ideas are influenced by the existentialist myth of Sisyphus. Nevertheless, Etzioni emphasizes the fact that sociological analysis is not responsible for this parallel; it is a product of the world which Etzioni analyses.

Projects can act as catalysts and trigger chain reactions (AS 652), but even these are often enough exhausted before the entire society has been transformed. At the height of the movement of 1968 – when the media still assumed that the movement's potential was unlimited – Etzioni saw the limits of this movement quite clearly. Using his skills in sociological analysis, Etzioni also concluded that such knowledge would be helpful if it influenced the process of mobilization from the very beginning. Therefore it is also important to maintain ties between various projects during a social movement. Even projects that have been misguided in some way, or have failed in a manner that corresponds with the existentialist concept of a person, can be used to test and improve the relations between the various elements of an active orientation – something that could not be said of a purely theoretical activity.

As a society's activities are strengthened and its degree of mobilization increases, division of labor, social differentiation and normative principles must all increase accordingly. As knowledge is further fragmented and specialization

increases, the basic need for coherence is frustrated. Therefore increased activity can cause a growth in feelings of futility and the sense that one is engaging in aimless exertion. Accordingly, the longing for homogeneity and the search for simple solutions can often be observed within social movements as well. To achieve reintegration, Etzioni proposes the establishment a new context on a higher level – an endeavor that would require the coupling of comprehensive education with active experience. On a macro-social level it would also be advisable to support, i.e. subsidize, the activities of these fields. Whenever fragmentation and differentiation are especially pronounced, grass-roots movements seem to react by developing a potential for regression. Gathering enough energy to counter fragmentation is often done at the cost of regression. But Etzioni actually considers this desirable, to a certain extent, and believes that this price must be accepted. For example, if the division of labor in industrial production is reduced to make work multifarious, more humane and more interesting, this could lead to a reduction in productivity. A second example: Members of certain bohemian subcultures live a much more integrated and intensive life than the nonchalant big-city dwellers of the post-modern era. But members of bohemian subcultures must also pay a price for their life style, as they must – at least at the beginning of their endeavor – go through a period of regression.

This all becomes problematic when movements fail to achieve social revitalization. In this case, movements must also fail to achieve the goal of reintegration, which means that social regression remains intact. In social movements, this state of regression can cause activities to become forced and self-centered. It can also lead to a variety of attempts to come to terms with this state by means of drugs, alcohol, long-term psychotherapy or Dionysian activities. Etzioni places his hope in people who are able to create a new public identity that they use as the basis for social actions, with the ever-present goal of transforming an inauthentic social system.

Methodologically, Etzioni's blueprint is a critical theory in the tradition of previous critiques of alienation. But Etzioni combines this critique of alienation with sober, down to earth sociological lessons regarding social processes that can be politically effective. This sort of political analysis of society transcends disciplinary boundaries; much as the theories of Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Erich Fromm have. But Etzioni has an edge on these authors; although he too was a Jewish emigrant from Germany, he has acquired a sort of American pragmatism when it comes to organizations.

In the interview in the appendix of this book, Etzioni describes the skeptical disapproval that Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton – the unchallenged rulers of American sociology at that time – expressed in response to his theoretical activism. Back then, academic sociology was not open to a new conception of theory and a comprehensive counter concept to Parson's system theory. On the other hand, Etzioni's approach was too reformist and social democratic for convinced Marxists.[26] Only today, it seems, is the way again open for a macro-sociological theory on collective actors, postmodernism and alienation. Most importantly, Etzioni systematically evaluated knowledge as a resource and conceptualized the knowledge and information society for the first time.[27] In fact, modern political science can no longer do without his theory of responsiveness. *The Active Society* had an especially strong influence on the work of the Max-Planck-Institute for Social Research in Cologne, Germany. At this institute Wolfgang Streeck, the Etzioni translator, and Fritz W. Scharpf have been especially active in developing a theory on collective actors, and have gone beyond Etzioni's work by developing their theory of actor-centered institutionalism.[28] Etzioni's theory of "societal guidance" and the newly differentiated theory of guidance concerning negotiation systems and the self-regulation of collectives are concerned with comparable problems. But because Cologne's scientific community has by and large neglected the activistic and existential feature of Eztioni's theory of action, Etzioni's influence has never become very apparent.

In *The Active Society* Etzioni provides only a rough outline of, and implies, the normative basis that he concerns himself with in his later works: *The Moral Dimension* (Chapter 7), in which he tries to demonstrate the importance of normative

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[26] Cf. Adloff , Frank: "Kollektive Akteure und gesamtgesellschaftliches Handeln," loc.cit., p. 151.

[27] Cf. ibid, p. 158.

[28] Cf. Mayntz, Renate/Scharpf, Fritz W.: *Gesellschaftliche Selbstregelung und politische Steuerung*, Frankfurt/M./New York, 1995; Scharpf, Fritz W.: *Games Real Actors Play*: *Actor Centered Institutionalism in Policy Research*. Boulder and Oxford/UK, 1997. See also: Adloff, Frank: "Kollektive Akteure und gesamtgesellschaftliches Handeln," loc.cit., p. 163.

theory by criticizing rational decision theory, and *The New Golden Rule* (Chapter 5), in which he develops a universal, normative program.

4. Overcoming Cultural Relativism

Taken as a whole, the political impact of communtarian thought is unquestionable. Etzioni has traveled to the world's most important countries and never had any trouble arranging meetings with top politicians – assuming they didn't come to him first. Etzioni has led countless multiplier events at universities and other such venues. The primary communitarian concepts, especially in their modified liberal forms, evolved into a sort of self-sufficient project. Therefore, after ten years of massive public relations efforts, Etzioni has increasingly come to the conclusion that the project ought to be re-academized. There must be critical studies of the intellectual history of communitarian thought, and a whole series of disputes and uncertainties must be clarified. The most difficult question is: How should communitarians deal with cultural relativism? Shouldn't they – based on their own methodology alone – respect cultural differences as well as opposing types of commitments, even if these commitments happen to violate human rights? After all, human rights seem to belong much more to universalistic-liberal thought than to communitarianism.

On the other hand, communitarians do support moral dialogue. But a dialogue only makes sense when common obligations are pursued; otherwise we have a morally unbearable arrangement in which each side expresses polite respect for the other side's human rights violations. Thus, whoever wants to improve moral communication in an international context cannot avoid asking whether global obligations are necessary after all. The problem of justifying values and determining their universal validity has shown itself to be the primary issue, especially in Asian countries. Here we have both the most common and most plausible objection to communitarian thought: That it approves of Asian traditionalism and state-centered authoritarianism, systems that compel the individual to serve the community

unconditionally and steal his rights and potential for self-development. Etzioni reacts to this accusation by announcing "the end of cross-cultural relativism."[29]

He grants that relativists bring up an understandable point. Traditional Western universalism was usually tied to the feeling that Western culture was generally superior. Cultural relativists demanded that people respect the individual rights and potential of other cultures. Early ethnology is marked by the attitude that "we" are scientific and modern and are obliged to study the "primitives." This posture even influenced the nature of ethnological photography: Most favored of all were orchestrated photos that showed tribe members in martial postures with their faces painted for war so that they appeared as foreign as possible. In order to properly understand other societies, anthropologists were forced – especially for methodical reasons – to free themselves of their feelings of Western superiority. It was important to show that other cultures are different, not inferior.

But the growth in ethnologists' understanding of their subject matter allowed for the emergence of a position – which later became a dogma – according to which all criticism that violates cultural bounds must be avoided. Nevertheless, behavior such as cannibalism, ritual child murder, removal of the clitoris or the murder of elders stood in such contradiction to Western concepts of right and wrong that withholding judgement was not possible. Similar problems arose during bloody outbreaks of violence between ethnic and religious groups and the mass murder that followed – between the Hindus and Muslims in India for example, or between the Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda. After all, genocide in Europe in the 20th Century was not tolerated on the grounds that it was a cultural element peculiar to the European continent. The change in ethnological photography contributed to this insight. Researchers who have lived together closely with tribes for years, present us with close-up images that are far different from the photos that were produced by earlier ethnologists. These photos expose manifold faces so that people from stone-age tribes in Papua New Guinea begin to look like our neighbors. These pictures and visages made the similarities between humans more noticeable and plausible.

Another cause of cultural relativism is a force that is deeply anchored in classical liberalism: The warding off of efforts to impose moral demands upon others

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[29] Etzioni, Amitai, The End of Cross-Cultural Relativism, in: Alternatives, Vol. 22, 1997, pp. 177-189.

or to place others under normative pressure. We can argue that if the early Western outlook was based on the conviction that Western civilization was superior, cultural relativism was the antithesis. But we are now in a synthesis phase that aims at finding new generally binding means of judgement.

Vehement objections to the Western conception of human rights were expressed during a meeting of the Asian heads of government in Bangkok in 1993. Then, in the same year, at the UN Human Rights Conference in Vienna, a binding overall plan was drafted. In the long run, it seems that the position of unconditional cultural relativism cannot be maintained, as this position makes it impossible to criticize genocide, torture, rape and other such crimes wherever and whenever they happen to take place. Conversely, Etzioni considers it appropriate that supporters of Asian values be heard whenever they have concerns about what they see as either the moral decay (especially as regards the family and respect towards the older generation) or the barbarian face of the West.[30]

Cultural relativists are often confronted with the argument that only rich Western countries can afford human rights, while other countries must postpone the implementation of such rights until they have reached an equivalent level of development. Etzioni does not accept this as a justification for human rights violations.

But if one rejects relativism, there must be some sort of universally valid and, most importantly, universally acceptable basis. But the typical strategies have proven themselves to be problematic and inadequate, e.g. the search for values that can be empirically proven to be truly identical in every society. The results of such efforts were exceptionally flimsy. Comprehensive human rights that are postulated by taking the constructivist route are hindered by the fact that such human rights are based on the decisions of committees that are not democratically legitimate. This is because the UN is still made up of a considerable number of non-democratic countries that have the same electoral rights as democracies. As a result, the drafting of the human rights documents is not based on a truly democratic process in which the People themselves are involved. As well, it is often the case that relevant resolutions are passed only because all participants realize that they are dealing with a declaration that will not

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[30] Cf. ibid, p. 179.

have any practical consequences. Therefore a serious discussion and dispute is considered useless

Furthermore, there are still debates as to whether social, cultural, and other such human rights should be included in the catalogs of rights. Therefore standards must be found for these areas as well so that it can be determined whether a proposed right should or should not be validated as an absolute human right. A typical communitarian approach is to engage in a moral dialog with other cultures. But this approach runs the risk of leaving us with questionable values that are based on tradeoffs instead of rules that are morally valid. In the end, the very last resort is to rely on something along the lines of intuitive self-evidence. Because of his own very pronounced intuition for values, Etzioni accepts this last-ditch alternative – at least when one must make one's own moral decision. But Etzioni is of course also aware of the mistakes and self-delusions that this approach can cause. Until now, philosophical end-justification has failed in every case. Therefore we are faced with a grave, unsolved problem for which a sound preliminary solution must be found. The call for re-academization of communitarianism should be understood as an appeal for a greater concentration of research efforts on the treatment of these questions. A practical communitarian such as Etzioni does not have the philosophical coolness that would allow him to live with problems such as these, which have not been solved for millenniums. Influenced by Kantian intuition, Etzioni comes to the conclusion that only a "philosophical scandal" would allow this sort of problem to simply remain unsolved for such a long time.

Regardless of the foundation upon which the validity of global customs and rules is ultimately based, these customs and rules will not have a formative strength that is equivalent to a society's internal moral stance until the world-wide moral dialogue has produced a common set of meaningful and compelling core values. The global moral foundation, which can be developed by means of this dialogue, has a much greater potential for success than the foundation that could be achieved by means of a global minimalism based on the lowest common denominator. The prerequisite for this basis is, first and foremost, the elimination of all barriers to inter-social communication. The simple fact that there is, initially, a whole series of varying and perhaps even contradictory moral voices does not mean that, in the end, a convergence will not be possible. The collapse of the legitimacy of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes demonstrates the virulence of the ideas that human rights

embody, even in societies that supposedly have, or truly do have, different structures than ours.

For Etzioni, this experience indicates the fact that even if, historically speaking, individual rights first appeared in the West, these rights are in truth values that are valid throughout the entire world. Even the protests of the Chinese government and some Asian intellectuals against the human rights culture (and especially the defensive posture that they take in making their arguments) demonstrate that the values that they are arguing against are remarkably valid. The goal is not to mercilessly force a value system upon others, but to develop a value system that is common to all. The discussions regarding these questions, and the growing recognition and legitimacy that these discussions have attracted, demonstrate that dialogue is the best way of moving beyond cultural relativism. What will remain of cultural relativism is the welcome criticism of both self-righteousness and the often careless and inadequate honoring of Western human rights in the West itself.

5. The New Golden Rule

The New Golden Rule (1996) is Etzioni's blueprint for a comprehensive, communitarian social theory that clearly distinguishes him from the communitarians such as Charles Taylor, Michael Sandel and Michael Walzer, who became well known in Europe before he did. Etzioni is especially critical of Sandel because of his tendency to overemphasize a society's community-oriented aspects in order to underscore his critique of liberalism. Etzioni on the other hand considers it important to achieve a balance between the idea of autonomy and personal rights, and the demands of social order. A balanced relationship between autonomy and order is the pivot of his communitarian philosophy. This is true in both political and philosophical terms, as Etzioni wrote this book in reaction to the various objections that he has confronted at hundreds of forums.

The community orientation present in early communitarian thought has particularistic elements; true to Ferdinand Tönnies' time, it focused on family, neighbors and

friends. But a worldwide discussion swept this coziness aside and led Etzioni to ponder the following question: Which types of discourse on virtue and which moral foundations would be acceptable in a universal context as well? A compromise was not possible because Etzioni considered some cultural elements – Asian forms of authoritarianism for example – unacceptable. In the case of Asian authoritarianism, harmony, order, and authority serve to inhibit the development of individual identity and individual rights. As an alternative to this collectivistic and conservative communitarianism, Etzioni offers his concept of responsiveness towards individuals, rather than groups alone.

The solution for the complex "Individual and Society" problem that Etzioni outlines is based upon the basic elements of his own functionalistic sociology. It starts with the concept of a social whole – or the common good – as well as the idea that a society must meet certain demands in order to maintain itself. Traditional functionalism was subjected to the accusation that it leaned towards an unfounded preference for the status quo. Etzioni's functionalism on the other hand, assumes that certain needs and demands are universally valid for all societies. But there are very different ways of dealing with these needs and demands. Etzioni is interested in a third way that exists alongside the classical leftist preference for the State and the equally classical liberal alternative, namely individualism. A "good society" should pursue a balance between social order and autonomy, whereby it must also pursue a balance between trends towards collectivistic welfare states and neoliberal hostility towards all things government related.

The order present in a good communitarian society is very much based upon normative means such as upbringing, leadership qualities, consensus, social pressure, examples set by role models, admonitions, and the clarity of moral positions. To maintain the cohesion of such societies, it is essential that most members share a group of central values by which they abide without being subjected to the use of explicit force. Here Etzioni clearly takes a position that is contrary to the repressive, martial concept of "law and order," and calls for civil relations between autonomous citizens who live within a "civil order."

According to Etzioni's concept, autonomy includes the support of regional self-governance, as well as the support of small groups and group differences (for example, the support of Frisian, Sorbian, and Danish minority languages in Germany). In accordance with Toquevillian ideas, the cultivation of a civil society

with intermediary organizations is promoted because it is the most flexible means of making individual freedom of choice and social goods possible, without creating contradictions; this flexibility is a result of the fact that civil society is, instead of being state-based, community-based.

As early as the nineteen sixties Etzioni presented a functionalistic typification of three integration forces in his comparative study of political unification processes. Integrative forces are coercive (e.g. military force, conquer), utilitarian (e.g. economic pressure or profit expectations) or normative, i.e. directed towards voluntary identification. Normative-identitive potential is usually contained in values or in the presentation of symbols. The use of violence is the most alienating form of integration. The utilitarian elements on the other hand, allow more room to maneuver, but are inferior to normative identitive integration, which much more convincingly introduces the element of voluntariness into the game of integration. Etzioni's studies of the role of value conceptions in modern societies are to be read with this theoretical background in mind. In this manner they distinguish themselves significantly from conventional moral sermons.[31]

The use of force alone to maintain social order is only temporarily viable. This was demonstrated, for example, by the rapid decline in the legitimacy of the Soviet Union – a point in time when ideology could no longer support the motivations of the ruling classes or the hope for a better future. A utilitarian motivation seems to be viable in the long run only if it is tied to moments of identification as well. Therefore it is not at all out of place, or simply idealistic, to strengthen normative-identitive forces that support social cohesion. In the US, the clearest example of the need for social cohesion was the rapid increase in the crime rate from 1,126 cases per 100,000 residents per year in 1960 to 5,820 cases in 1990. In this period violent crimes also increased by 450 percent and the percentage of the labor force in prison doubled – growing from 0.295 to 0.584 percent. If we include the people who were on probation, were obligated to report to the police on a regular basis, or came into contact with the criminal justice system in another manner, we reach a figure of 6 percent. Since 1990 this problem has become the focus of public interest and political countermeasures. But these efforts had long-term effects only because they were met

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[31] Cf. the same in *Political Unification*: *A Comparative Study of Leaders and Forces*, New York/Chicago 1965, p. 37 and following pages.

with broad public support. The public discussion and criticism of anti-social behavior, as well as the emphasis on personal responsibility for one's self and social obligations in relations with others, have triggered a change. This transformation was possible because public efforts have not been limited to conservative – often religious or faith-based – right-wing groups, but have instead included large parts of the liberal community. And, since then, the crime rate has in fact fallen (NGR 44 and following pages).

Barring a certain delay, the situation in other western societies is very similar. Between 1972 and 1987, the crime rate in Germany increased by 75 percent. About the same is true of each important European country. Japan presents us with a typical case study example of the opposite trend; namely an oversteered communitarian society with a criminal justice system in which defendants have only very limited protective rights. In this case there is not enough autonomy, while the normative-identitive order (which is not at all merely state-coercive) has excessive characteristics. Therefore Japan can be considered the typical case of a country that must move towards more individualism in order to achieve a communitarian balance. In fact, it must be understandable that sociological functionalism offers contrasting developmental directions, which can be taken in pursuing a balance between order and autonomy and are structured differently for each society. Nonetheless, laypeople and professional critics consider community orientation completely inappropriate for Asian societies and are critical of communitarians for supporting this remedy. But this response to communitarian thought is much more primitive than communitarian thought itself; it operates according to a two-dimensional matrix – "liberalism versus communitarianism" – while communitarians utilize a matrix that has at least four dimensions – the liberalization of excessively communitarian structures and the communitarization of excessively atomistic societies. In reality we are dealing with an even more complex model than this, as the prerequisites in the various societies must also be sectorally differentiated.

A somewhat embarrassing irony amidst this entire discussion, especially in the German academic world, is that this under-complexity is often used to criticize Etzioni's work. This is paradoxical, as these criticisms are actually based upon schematized, oversimplified responses to Etzioni's own approach, which is in fact clearly more demanding than it is sometimes portrayed to be. In Germany, Etzioni's clear, concise and example-rich language is interpreted as a weakness, and his

reasoning is reproached for being too simplistic, despite the fact that much simpler ideas are often hidden beneath a thick layer of sociological jargon.

For Etzioni, genuinely communitarian societies are democratically composed. Therefore they are much less likely than authoritarian structures to turn to oversteering. A comparison of the former USSR and the USA shows that the primary strength of the USA was the close connection between the civil society and the political structure. In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, the state sector dominated all areas of the society; although the state was sometimes able to introduce initiatives that led to social progress, it systematically paralyzed the development of independent initiative and prevented the growth of a civil society (a problem that continues to plague modern Russia). The state-centrist Soviet Union is one of the most extreme examples of an anti-communitarian society, in which, despite all collectivist ideologies, the individual is treated as a singular social atom – an assessment that completely coincides with Hannah Arendt's analysis of totalitarian forms of government. According to Arendt, the rule of central bureaucracy is based upon a condition in which mistrust caps and regulates connections between and amongst individuals so that each person who begins to develop a deviant opinion is left completely alone and helpless and must face a superior apparatus.[32]

The intellectual sources that these ideas draw upon can be found in the sociology of Emile Durkheim, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Robert Nisbet; the social philosophy of John Dewey and George Herbert Mead; and of course, most importantly, the utopianism of kibbutz communities, which was discussed at the beginning of this book and was so vividly advocated by Martin Buber. After authors such as Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer and Michael Sandel (a student of Taylor's) sharply criticized the individualistic liberalism of the nineteen eighties Etzioni used the methods of his own functionalistic sociology to expand upon these ideas. But the worldwide discussion has presented communitarian thought with a number of very challenging questions. Etzioni analyses these questions in the best and most enlightening sections of *The New Golden Rule*, but is not able to present a closing concept that would offer a solution to these problems and convince every last critic.

The question is – Who, in the end, should be the judge of a community's values? Ideas about values are not just questions of taste that can be answered

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[32] Cf. Arendt, Hannah: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. San Diego 1979.

according to any one person's preference at any given moment. But there do not appear to be universal values either, as all attempts to ascertain these values empirically or establish them normatively have thus far failed.

Dissimilar civil social sub-communities have to coexist with one another and must therefore scrutinize and align their respective values. The basic model is that of a mosaic-like "community of communities." The other option, the assimilation of all individuals into one single social construct, would represent oversteering. "The sociological challenge is to develop societal formations that leave considerable room for the enriching particulars of autonomous subcultures and communities while sustaining the core of shared values" (NGR 196). Because a firm common framework must encircle these societies, it is clear that Etzioni rejects a pandemonium. This common framework must include the following elements:

Democracy is considered a value and not merely an organizational mechanism.

The constitution and its fundamental rights are binding.

Loyalties must exist in graduated form, i.e. there must not be exclusive loyalty – neither to a social sub-group nor to the entire nation.

Tolerance means that one does not make normative objections to, but instead respects – without necessarily accepting – the customs, practices and values of groups that are culturally different.

Therefore, so-called "identity politics" may only be practiced in very limited form.

Society-wide moral dialogues, which are conducted in a civil manner so as to prevent civil war, will make a mutual reconcilement of value concepts possible.

In democratic societies the justification of values is absolutely essential, as moral concepts must not be forced upon anyone in an authoritarian manner. After all, a justification that is valid within a community is always more than a private wish alone. But such a justification has only taken the first step in a process of generalization that varies depending on the problem and situation. In the event of an encounter between different societies, it is important to develop socially comprehensive moral dialogues, for which Etzioni reserves an excellent word – "megalogues." Whereas Habermas presents his concept of a purely procedural dialogue, Etzioni takes the realistic position that real human beings do not leave their convictions at the door in order to enter a purely abstract discourse. A pure moral dialogue cannot be maintained in this manner. An artificial world of regulations designed to ensure purely deliberative discourses would constantly be violated, as it

would not reflect sociological reality. Because such regulations would demand of people a sort of behavior that is diametrically opposed to their basic human nature and character, they would be more likely to encourage cynicism than a moral orientation. This is because people want to take moral positions instead of simply defining their own values as meaningless and factoring them out. But moral dialogues do have to be arranged so that they meet basic democratic conditions. Because the process of globalization makes the coordination of very different ideas on one common playing ground essential, common ideas about moral relativism – which are often associated with communitarian standpoints – must be relinquished. Therefore it is important – not just on ideological grounds, but for practical-functional reasons as well – to reconcile conflicting moral ideas by means of a concrete, solution-oriented dialogue. In such situations, the language of right is inflexible and can only lead to endless disputes.[33] The language of morality, on the other hand, represents the inclusion of the other person's position in a common, dialogical community of values. Furthermore, a megalogue can gain the momentum necessary to initiate a meaningful transformation in the basic values of individual societies and groups. This momentum can be achieved whenever various societies' differing sets of values create the need for coordination within a common realm of action. But communitarian societies differ from authoritarian societies in this point as well; a communitarian society's common core of shared values – which is genuinely necessary – is much less extensive than it would be in an authoritarian social order.

The process of globalization necessitates, first and foremost, an improvement in the adaptive capacity of economic enterprises, and, therefore, of workers as well. The psychosocial consequences for the "slower ones," those who are in danger of being left behind, as well as the effects of globalization upon the social cohesion of societies, are to be taken very seriously. The continuation of the employment society under the conditions of globalization and extreme competition leads to interrupted career paths along with various periods of extended education, professional work, early pensioning, the search for employment, and extended vocational training and retraining. Globalization and extreme competition also lead to new occupations that

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[33] Regarding legal language, Etzioni refers repeatedly to the influential study of his colleague, Mary Ann Glendon. Cf. Glendon, Mary Ann: *Rights Talk*: *The Impoverishment of Political Discourse*, New York/London 1991.

are, if necessary, mixed with precarious forms of existence such as intermediary periods of self-employment, attempted self-employment and pseudo self-employment. This model requires an increased degree of flexibility on the part of employees, i.e. a constant search for employment niches and the repeated adjustment to short-term projects in which they must continue to deliver novel and enthusiastic engagement. But despite all of these expectations, employees are not given credit for their prior achievements; each person must prove his or her abilities anew, each and every day. In a study entitled *The Corrosion of Character*,[34] Richard Sennett presents an impressive description of the potential damage that this model of employment can wreak upon social cohesion and individual character:

Personal experience becomes fragmented.

Long-term work continuity disappears. People can no longer build upon accustomed, cooperative social contacts. Trust falls by the wayside.

Employees can no longer depend upon established routines.

People assume long-term life-path-shaping risks that are difficult to assess and calculate.

The work ethic that is based upon long-term development and deferred reward collapses when employees only have short-term projects to work on.

The teamwork that so many employers demand creates a merely superficial group experience and prevents the development of feelings of personal responsibility. These are therefore merely feigned forms of community.

Failure is tabooed; but even amongst middle-aged people, a weighty feeling of resignation and a deep-seated fatigue sets in, meaning that, as often as possible, coworkers over the age of 35 are excluded from projects that demand flexibility.

Therefore employees must, principally speaking, have already saved for their retirement by the time they reach the age in which professional athletes end their careers. Otherwise they are faced with old age poverty.

Forced relocation, following the acquisition of a new job, endangers and sometimes destroys family structures.

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[34] Cf. Sennett, Richard: *The Corrosion of Character*, New York 1998.

Sennett reaches a dismal conclusion: "A regime that does not give people a significant reason to concern themselves with each other's needs, cannot maintain its legitimacy for very long."[35]

It has already been common for a long time for the unemployed to be marginalized, just as the lower classes are pushed aside. As a result of the trend towards employment that is formed to fit individual projects, even that which was once considered the integrative strength of the work-world – its ability to encourage social cohesion – disappears from the center of society. Work no longer creates social connections, but instead destroys them, and continues to dissolve existing forms of cohesion at home and in the family. If, in retrospect, the industrialization and urbanization of the 19th Century can still be considered a transitional phase that produced new types of social connection through the organization of education for workers, cooperatives, unions, clubs of sorts, and the social environment of the worker movement, then we are now experiencing a new and far-reaching upheaval.

It is clear that communitarian thought must provide a response to this practical challenge:

A concerted slowdown in the adaptation demands that are produced by the process of globalization. Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand are quite obviously following a slower path than the USA. A gradual reduction in customs, import quotas and other trade barriers makes it easier to adapt to new strategies and socioeconomic conditions.

The creation of "community jobs." The provision of financial support on a local level for the production of public goods such as schools, public libraries, kindergartens and efforts to protect the environment. Making decisions at a local level should ensure that actions are closely linked to actual needs. Otherwise, actual needs might be overlooked during the distribution of government financed public employment – an oversight that can lead to significant financial losses.

Job sharing and greater job security. It is completely legitimate to accept varying working hours (and payments) depending on the conditions of the assignment as long as this variation is combined with planning reliability and job security.

A basic feeling of social security must be created for all. Nobody should go without health insurance and a certain degree of basic social care. Here it is not the exact

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[35] Ibid. p. 203.

extent of the support that is most important, but the fixed and reliable assurance that all unemployed, handicapped or sick – as well as their children – will receive basic aid, regardless of which party is currently in power or which political course is currently being taken.

The voluntary simplification of basic needs could perhaps serve as an additional source of support as well. The alternative culture of the nineteen sixties certainly pursued an ideological exaggeration of the simple life; on a large scale and in the long run, such ideas are not compatible with a modern economy. But there are definitely trends that suggest that there are some young urban professionals and academics who do not consider a focus on marginal consumer goods an especially useful purpose in life; for whom excessive consume is not a quality of life issue. Voluntary simplicity reduces dependency upon the world market and, accordingly, reduces the amount of adaptation required to develop an independent and self-determined lifestyle.

These models are very attractive to communitarians whose ideas are based to a large extent on voluntarism and reciprocal confirmation of such stances; but these communitarians do not want to use power, i.e. legal measures, to force these models upon the general population. Laws should be designed so that they enable, support and tolerate such life styles instead of forcing them upon others. Here as well we can see the priority of liberal elements within communitarian liberalism; in keeping with its own intellectual heritage, it supports the American tradition of religious freedom for all sects and self-determined belief structures – as long as these do not seek to expand their sphere of control to include others.

Of course, a strong and self-identical political collectivity does not necessarily arise out of an array of sects. A collection of sects could just as well lead to pandemonium and a situation in which local leaders and warlords lead factions that fight against one another in a civil war-like manner. Besides the strong peace making role of the state, the existence of a common value system is essential. At first glance this thesis, which is also shared by many political scientists in Germany (e.g. Claus Offe, Ulrich K. Preuss and Herfried Münkler), seems very remarkable – until one considers the fact that the prevailing individualist ideology focuses its opposition on this very point. Common values are clearly not simply the result of agreements that are produced by negotiation or other such procedures; in fact they can be considered the basic elements of a society's moral infrastructure. In economic terms they are a public good – socio-politically they are the integrative elements of a social structure.

A society functions well only when the vast majority of its citizens abide by its laws and informal moral codes most of the time. The enforcement of laws can only be effective, i.e. avoid unnecessary social costs, when there are only a few norm violators to be dealt with.

The nature of such value concepts definitely does vary. The "scientific community" for example would aim at achieving true and apt research results, while social workers may at times, for professional reasons, be obliged to place the value of empathy ahead of veracity and must behave accordingly. But in the end there is a need for all-encompassing social standards, which are still capable, at certain crucial points, of redirecting such professional ethics towards a common social life. In terms of intellectual history, the establishment of modern communitarian thought should be seen as the pursuit of such society-wide management, which must remain flexible enough in relations with subgroups and must not present itself in a manner reminiscent of earlier substantialist and moralistic constraints. Today, only theocracies still try to intervene in the most private of situations by applying narrow-minded rules. That having been said, from a normative communitarian standpoint, behavior that violates a society's core values must be considered immoral – whether it occurs in a supermarket, at home, on the street or anywhere else. In this point – reduced to its core values – Etzioni agrees, as do feminist communitarian thinkers (e.g. Carole Pateman or Elizabeth Fraser) who are trying to transcend the division between public and private values. Basically, a distinction needs to be made between behavior that is protected by a society's core values, and behavior that is not protected by these values. This difference runs parallel to the distinction between public and private matters. In concrete terms this means that one cannot, for example, marry whomever one chooses. This is because Mormons are forbidden from practicing polygamy even though it is endorsed by their religion; as a result, polygamy is not a private matter.

Common value concepts are cultural, not individual. That is also true for societies that consider themselves individualistic, as the education and socialization of individuality requires an especially demanding and complex social structure. This includes, amongst other things, the development of a certain civility. Etzioni approves of civil social structures, which include, for example, tolerance, but does not consider them good enough; one must go above and beyond these structures. The tolerant civil society should also be re-moralized so that it does not only accept differences, but

instead stabilizes and develops commonalities. The civil society should regain a sort of moral voice. It is therefore a unique means of motivating people to behave morally. As opposed to older types of social integration, which laid claim to a monopoly over the moral positioning of its members, new communities are conceived of as a multi-layered means of protection from moral oppression, ostracism and expulsion. Therefore Etzioni speaks, in *The New Golden Rule*, of "multicommunities," which, as a result of their multiple memberships alone, offer a means of defense against excessive communality. Today such multiple memberships have long since become the standard situation. But multiple orientations do not work well when they leave the individual alone to act within a single hub of communication; they function in a morally and emotionally satisfying manner only if people are open to participation and dialogue and there is a given set of commonly held values.

In Etzioni's opinion, means of regulation that depend on moral articulation are less loaded with implications of force than purely legal-repressive types of regulation are. In any case, Etzioni believes that the reach of laws that are not carried by a base of social approval is insufficient. Most important of all, a third form of regulation – public, moral-oriented communication – must be placed along side state-based regulation, which functions by means of its monopoly of violence, and economic-based regulation, which operates according to profit and profit expectations. In this manner the state and the market will be complemented by solidified civil society regulations that are subject to reflexive self-controls.

The New Golden Rule is, in summarized form, a sociological functionalistic attempt to provide an answer to the moral challenges that the processes of globalization pose. According to this approach communities, regardless of how extensive they are designed to be, are not the courts of last instance when deciding on the correctness of individual convictions. This highest authority in this matter continues to be each individual's strong sense of evidence. However, individuals are also encouraged, according to their own judgment and of their own accord, to compare their individual self-evidence with the convictions of others in order to form a balanced viewpoint. Simply put, Etzioni's intellectual thought should be considered communitarian liberalism.

6. The Program and Praxis of the Communitarians

In 1990, Amitai Etzioni, together with a group of philosophers and social scientists, established the "Communitarian Network" and a magazine, *The Responsive Community*. Then on November 18, 1991 the Responsive Communitarian Platform: Rights and Responsibilities, which Etzioni wrote together with Mary Ann Glendon and William Galston, was finally presented to the general public. Seventy initial signatories, including both liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans, supported this platform.

Initially, in the nineteen eighties, communitarian ideas were a result of purely academic discussions. Therefore the goal of this (1991) initiative was to move these communitarian ideas from the university campus into the wider society. Important participants in this effort included Robert Bellah, Philipp Selznick, Daniel A. Bell, Robert Putnam, Hans Joas, and John Gray; and from the conservative side (of the political spectrum), David Willets, Meinhard Miegel and, later on, Stephen Goldsmith as well – the mayor of Indianapolis who wanted to actively support the reemergence of metropolitan America after it had undergone decades of urban decay.

There was a conscious effort to distance this new communitarian platform from the old, pre-1990 communitarians, as they emphasized the necessity of communities, but hardly directly mentioned the danger that repressive and authoritarian communities pose. Therefore the differences between the new communitarians and Ferdinand Tönnies, Michael Sandel and Alasdair MacIntyre were very carefully elaborated. Modern communitarian thought was to confront the concerns that George Orwell presents in *1984* and maintain a clear critical distance between itself and all forms of totalitarianism, adherence to sects and religious fundamentalism.[36]

Emphasis was placed on responsiveness towards individuals and the connection between rights and responsibilities. Traditional communitarian thought, on

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[36] Cf. Etzioni, Amitai (ed.): *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, Lanham et al. 1998, p. X and following pages.

the other hand, usually only stressed the individual's obligations towards the community and tended to neglect individual rights. This focus on individual rights is probably the essential element that is common to all new communitarians, who, it should be added, hold a wide variety of political viewpoints and cover an entire ideological spectrum – from liberal to social-democratic and conservative.

Etzioni describes the initial social conditions that triggered the communitarian movement as follows: In the sixties fixed bonds and social values began to weaken. Society reacted with a forced search for meaning, which often helped the careers of a number of people who were charlatans in preacher's robes or political demagogues. In this manner, repressive social ideals were introduced. The communitarians considered these ideals dangerous, but did not want to reply with polemic alone. Instead, they tried to follow the legitimate impulse that had led to a search for meaning in the first place. It was important to highlight a third factor, civil society, which existed alongside two factors that had been over-emphasized in American society – the state and the economy. Common to all of these theories is the communitarian triangle: State – Market –
Civil Society. But, Etzioni often likes to replace "civil society" with the term "community." Etzioni feels that the term "society" is too likely to suggest something abstract and alienating; that it implies anonymity. He also makes this substitution because he believes that civil society's web of commonalities is too wide-meshed.

In all communitarian approaches it is important that politically desirable strategies are anchored in civil society. That means, for example, that it is completely inadequate for the state to incarcerate drug dealers, as they will continue to deal drugs while they are in prison. A purely state-run strategy of suppression is more likely to lead to a police state than to help fight drug abuse. It is more important that the people themselves – if they really do reject drugs and drug use – exert moral and social pressure to prevent others from using drugs. The decisive factor is not all-inclusive surveillance, but a change in social opinions.

Etzioni points out that in the US, in the 1920s, prohibition failed and the US gained a long-term organized crime problem because a moral minority tried to ban alcohol with the help of the state; a proscription that society was not prepared to accept. On the other hand, over a period of more than 25 years, smoking bans have been largely successful because they reflect social desires. It is hardly ever the case that the police are called to deal with a smoker, because the social pressure that a

smoker faces seems to be sufficient. But such pressure is so strong only because there is an overwhelming majority that has the courage to speak to strangers in order to maintain a genuine implementation of smoking bans. The prohibition of smoking achieved its widespread strength of enforcement when the harmful effects of passive smoking became clear, thus demonstrating that smoking does not harm smokers alone. Likewise, we can conclude that outlawing drugs is only feasible when there is a similar degree of widespread social approval. Till now, people have, for the most part, interpreted drug consumption as an act that harms the user alone.

These examples make it clear that communitarian ideas need not be limited to the small areas that families and neighborhoods occupy, but can instead be applied to all of society. Nevertheless, Etzioni does consider families important. This is why it is essential that a "good society" grant men and women the legal right to take parental leave. Neighborhoods in immigrant quarters such as Little Havana in Miami, or Chinatown in New York are typical "communities." But they do not have to be defined geographically. The members of Jewish communities, for example, often live throughout an entire city. What is crucial is a social and normative framework that is especially strong at certain social focal points – synagogues, private schools and other such institutions. In fact, "communities" can even be located in cyberspace.

There is a great deal of evidence that people who live in communities benefit both physically and spiritually. If we accept the results of recent socio-medical research, it follows that:

"socially isolated men have nearly double the mortality from cardiovascular disease of those with the largest social networks". In 1988, Wellsburg, in western Virginia, had a particularly high incidence of heart disease - 29 per cent above the national average. Then the community decided to do something about it, organising walks, healthy suppers, aerobics classes and so on. By 1996, the area's cardiovascular health profile was one of the best in the state. In their classic study of lonely New Yorkers in high-rise apartments, Mental Health in the Metropolis, Leo Srole and his associates found that 60 per cent of the residents had subclinical psychiatric conditions and 20 per cent were judged psychologically impaired. Strong communities have lower rates of juvenile delinquency, less drug and alcohol abuse, and less need for publicly funded social services such as childcare and grief counselling. Practically all kinds of antisocial behaviour are relatively low among Mormon communities in Utah,

Orthodox Jewish communities in New York and black Muslim groups, as well as in villages and in small towns."[37]

Such communities are not necessarily good or moral communities, as well. The can be monolithic, internally repressive or authoritarian. Formally, we could even refer to the Ku-Klux-Klan or certain terrorist organizations as communities. But, such organizations are typically radically isolated; the same is also often true of sects. Therefore the criterion of "good communities" is that they are rooted in a larger, pluralistic web of communities. An especially useful defense against a single society exerting disproportionate social pressure is the existence of multiple memberships. Good communities must also be embedded in a society and respect constitutions in which minorities and individual rights enjoy a pre-eminent position. Furthermore, the public nature and transparency of the *Gemeinschaft* and moral dialogues between communities can provide us with the means of protecting against mafias and criminal organizations.

In this manner we can pursue a third way that lies between individualistic, radical liberalism and conservative authoritarianism. Etzioni calls for the application of moral pressure on one's fellow human beings, but includes a liberal restriction; pressure should be applied on behavior alone, not on viewpoints or thoughts. In his opinion, the thought police of political correctness should not be lumped together with people who publicly criticize antisocial and immoral behavior. A new form of Puritanism must be avoided. We should not fight against statements that are sodden with prejudices and bigotry by placing limits on free speech, but by means of public censure.[38]

When it comes to the social cohesion of societies: The more people can rely upon common, practical social patterns of behavior – that which Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit* (ethos) – the lower the potential for conflict between freedom and order. A

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[37] Idem: "The Road to the Good Society" in: *The New Statesman*, 05/15/2000.

[38] Cf. idem: "A Moral Awakening Without Puritanism" in: *The New Statesman*, 05/15/2000, pp. 41-45. On political correctness see p. 43. Cf. with a similar debate: Butler, Judith: *Excitable Speech. A Politics for the Performative, New York: Routledge 1997*; Reese-Schäfer, Walter: *Politische Theorie heute. Neuere Tendenzen und Entwicklungen*, Munich/Vienna 2000, pp. 285-299.

community should rely on the state only when four criterions have been met: 1. There must be a clear and present danger; exaggerated fears are not sufficient grounds. 2. There is no alternative to state intervention. 3. The intervention must be as cautious as possible. 4. Damaging side effects must be taken into consideration and minimized (EG XIII).

But completely ruling out state activities would not be possible, especially in the area of social politics, as free associations and clubs, even large religious communities, would be overwhelmed by the costs that this would entail. I will discuss this topic in further detail at the end of this chapter.

Since 1990 Etzioni has been the primary proponent of practice-oriented communitarian thought. The political success of this modernized communitarianism, which has been freed of its traditional elements, is impressive. The political impulse of the communitarian movement – a purely intellectual organization with a high degree of efficiency but limited social breadth – has proven itself to be exceptionally effective, as its ideas have worked their way into the halls of central governments within a very short period of time. Communitarian rhetoric played an important role in Bill Clinton's electoral victories in 1992 and 1996; and was even more important for Tony Blair in 1997. In both cases it was important that a political language be found which could be used to speak to, and win back, the social middle-class, a constituency in which both parties had lost ground. Along with Anthony Giddens, communitarianism has served as a primary source of ideas for the Third Way, a political current that the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder termed the "the New Middle." The high point of this worldwide community-oriented reform concept was probably reached in Berlin, in July 2000, at the international meeting of fourteen left and left-liberal heads of government. The subjects of these talks included new approaches to governance and the citizen and service sector-oriented reform of state apparatus. The communiqué that these leaders adopted, "**Progressive Governance for the 21st Century**", is essentially a communitarian document.

Etzioni expressed support for these social democratic and left-liberal initiatives. But he was also always aware that the communitarian approach signified a movement towards something "beyond left and right." There had to be a reduction in both the left's overemphasis on the state and the political right's exaggerated support of the market, to enable the strengthening of civil society elements. Leaning too far in one political direction or the other was not an option. This was simply because

communitarian thought could not be allowed to become a short-term concept that would only be useful for a few electoral advisors during a couple of political campaigns; communitarian thought is a response to an essential social need that lies much deeper. The acceleration of modernization processes by the pressures of globalization, the crisis facing traditional moral values, and, equally so, the crisis that the modernized morality of the sixties and seventies was confronted with, serve as cues to these fundamental social needs. The answers to these difficulties, which were found by restoring public space in cities and returning it to citizens, would be just as likely to appear in the initiatives of left-wing liberal mayors as in the programs of conservative mayors. During two periods as the republican mayor of Indianapolis (from 1992 till 1999), Stephen Goldsmith developed a concept of urban renewal, which he describes and presents as an example to others in his book, *The Twenty-First Century City: Resurrecting Urban America* (1999).

In response to this book, Etzioni visited Indianapolis and verified the fact that Stephen Goldsmith had developed a perfect communitarian concept. In 1999 Goldsmith joined George W. Bush's team of advisors. During the election, Bush expressed his support of a "compassionate conservatism" in order to refer to the fact that a pure market liberalism had to be complemented by a new concept of empathy and responsibility for poor people and immigrants. Then, after his election, Bush added other proven supporters of civil-society concepts to his team. His inaugural address of January 20, 2001 relied on a series of communitarian terms such as "civility," "responsibility" and "community." Amitai Etzioni even went as far as to describe this speech as a communitarian text.[39]

The tones of the classic inaugural addresses of American presidents have always been very lofty. But, over the centuries they have also tended to reflect the spirit of the times – or at least its positive sides. John F. Kennedy's 1961 inaugural address continues to be cited today because it summarized, in few words, the period of reform and great expectations so characteristic of the nineteen sixties. It is the ideological content of the inaugural address, rather than its degree of reality, that is decisive. George W. Bush's speechwriter was given the task of writing a text that would be appropriate for the first decade of the new century, but would also join

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[39] Cf. Milbank, Dana: "Needed: Catchword for Bush Ideology: Communitarianism finds favor" in: *Washington Post*, 02/01/2001, Section A, p. 1.

vision with tradition. Two citations from this text demonstrate very clearly the communitarian rhetoric of the new American administration: "America has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests and teach us what it means to be citizens. Every child must be taught these principles. Every citizen must uphold them. And every immigrant, by embracing these ideals, makes our country more, not less, American." "I ask you to be citizens: citizens, not spectators; citizens, not subjects; responsible citizens, building communities of service and a nation of character." Bush and his advisors now even claim that the concept of civil society and communitarian thought hold together various elements of their political efforts.

Since its foundation, the communitarian movement and its ideas have been aimed at both left-wing liberals and conservatives. The initiators have always valued the cross party spirit of their efforts; but it was only after George W. Bush's adoption of their rhetoric that this spirit was documented in practical political terms. Until this point, it had looked as if the Democratic Party and New Labour – and the other social democratic parties, from Brazil to Germany – had found, in communitarianism, a language that they could use to communicate their energy and ideas to the middle classes. In Germany, on the other hand, communitarian thought has always crossed party lines; it has elicited the support of members of the Social Democratic Party (Rudolf Scharping), the Green Party (Joschka Fischer) and the Christian Democratic Union (Kurt Biedenkopf). In fact, the German Minister of Justice, Herta Däubler-Gmelin, went as far as to publicly accuse members of the CDU of trying to "steal" communitarian ideas from the SPD. Etzioni has always emphasized that the transcendence of party lines is essential to the effectiveness of his ideas.[40] It has now been confirmed in the USA as well that politicians such as Hillary Clinton – who wrote a communitarian inspired book on upbringing, *It Takes a Village* – do not have a monopoly on communitarian ideas. Faced with the pressures of a slight electoral majority, conservative thinkers are also turning to the concept of a self-organized

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[40] For an in depth discussion of this cf. Reese-Schäfer, Walter: "Neuere Entwicklungen kommunitarischer Politik" in *Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen*, 12. Jg., 1999, H. 2, pp. 65-76. Regarding the German justice minister's accusation of theft, cf. p. 71.

middle class. And, at least ideologically, conservatives have shunned cold neo-liberalism, which can't be used to win elections at this point in time.

This all points to a return to the idea of basic care for all in the area of social politics as well. Etzioni has emphasized that in a good society it is the obligation of the state to "ensure that no one will go hungry, homeless or, when sick, unattended. To allow them to do so is morally demeaning, psychologically debilitating and politically foolish. Providing basics will not kill the motivation to work for most able-bodied people, as long as work is available. And if there are some who abuse the system, a good society should consider that a small price to pay in order not to deny anyone's basic humanity."[41] Etzioni points out that we also guarantee prisoners of war a similar list of basic needs. Charitable organizations, the family or friends simply cannot accomplish this task standing alone. When it comes to the provision of housing, clothing, food and basic health care for the poor, the state is necessary and indispensable. Etzioni considers the US and British governments' release of hundreds of thousands of patients from state-run psychiatric clinics – under the false assumption that community centers would assume responsibility for these patients – a fundamental mistake. There were no community centers, and new centers were not established. He also objects to the elimination of welfare benefits, in both countries, to social aid recipients who do not abide by specific guidelines. "Such measures are not compatible with the Third Way. In a community, responsibility from all is paralleled by responsibility for all. In other words, a community has a moral responsibility to ensure that no one is treated inhumanely, to ensure that all get a rich basic minimum."[42] Accordingly, Etzioni criticized Blair's attempt, during the beginning of his term as Prime Minister, to imitate the American example and reduce welfare benefits to people who are "lazy."[43] In response to this criticism, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* expressed its concern and asked Etzioni whether he was trying to resurrect

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[41] Etzioni, Amitai: "The Road to the Good Society," loc.cit.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Cf. idem, "Tony Blair: A communitarian in the Making?" in: *The Times*, 06/21/1997.

the traditional welfare state. His answer was typically functionalistic: It must be revitalized in those areas that have experienced acute regression.[44]

Hence, Etzioni feels that state interventions are necessary in certain social areas; in face of the current situation in the US, he would even like to see strengthened interventions. This is equally true as far as basic rights such as free speech and freedom of assembly are concerned, freedoms that the state guarantees but must also somehow regulate. Therefore Etzioni considers the current threat that the radical right poses in Europe (especially, as Etzioni emphasizes, in Austria) in these terms as well: It is essential that social pressure be placed upon right-wing extremists, but the state as well must fight against and prevent the aggressions that such groups engage in.

In summarizing it can be said that we are dealing with an alternative model that is designed to reverse what was at first considered the decline of the American city and was then finally interpreted as the worldwide disintegration of social capital. The disinterest in political participation, the growth in political apathy, the fall in the number of church goers, the dwindling number of union members, the descent of bridge clubs and evening parties, the decline in volunteer services, and even the reduced willingness to spend blood, were the clear signals being sent. Robert Putnam summarized these trends in a vivid phrase: "Bowling alone." The Americans still go bowling, but they don't organize private league games – they play for themselves, alone. For a few years people consoled themselves by pointing out that although old social organizations such as churches and the Red Cross or local dignitary circles such as the Lions Clubs or the Jewish B'nai B'rith were losing members, new organizations were taking their place; in this manner people hoped to disprove Putnam's theory. Under Putnam's leadership, fifty social scientists conducted a comprehensive study that has now shown that these new organizations were usually composed of little more than "mailing lists" – organizations in which member activity

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[44] Cf. Pries, Christine/Siemens, Jochen: "Deutschland, das ist ein Tod auf Raten. Amitai Etzioni über die Idee des Kommunitarismus und das Spannungsfeld zwischen Staat und Individuum" in: *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 11/10/1997.

merely entailed a small contribution and the passive receipt of informational brochures.[45]

This trend is clearly not limited to the US and appears to be spreading across the globe very rapidly. The initiatives and activities of the communitarians are a reaction to this trend and are also an attempt to prevent social isolation and atomization from destroying democracy. Therefore they hope to encourage the active reorganization of the third, civil society sector by promoting an increase in participatory elements as well as a rise in societies' own potential for activity. Otherwise, if the ability to self-organize on a voluntary basis is lost, there is the danger that a dynamic economy, together with a bureaucratic state, might fill the vacuum created by a lack of citizen participation and downgrade people to passive consumers.

7. The Economy's Moral Dimension: Social Economics

In 1989 Etzioni founded the „Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics" with the goal of challenging the dominant neo-liberal economic theory by introducing a new paradigm, which was to be at least as scientifically sound and stable as neo-liberalism. The neoclassical concepts and findings were not to be discarded; instead the goal was to embed these in a comprehensive approach. In their existing form, these ideas could still be used when analyzing certain aspects of individual behavior and markets. But it is important to define a context in which market forces do and should play an active role (MD 3-4). We can describe the theoretical starting point as follows: People see themselves as both individuals and as members of communities. It would be wrong to define the former sense of belonging alone as a valid theoretical paradigm, as this would leave us with a theory that is only half-valid. A complete

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[45] Cf. Putnam, Robert: *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York 2000.

theory can only be developed when one recognizes that the ability of an individual to act rationally and independently is partially determined by his or her anchoring in well-functioning communities (MD ix-x). Individuals do not, as the individualist theory concept suggests, necessarily experience the community as someone else's world in which limitations are placed upon individual freedom. Instead, many individuals experience community as their own "we." The goal of modern socio-economics is to develop a synthesized I+We-paradigm that is normatively based on a moderate social obligation ethic.

Practitioners of deontological (obligation oriented) ethics do not judge behavior by its corollary as utilitarians do, and are instead interested in intentions. Thus, a person who wants to defame another person behaves immorally, regardless of the outcome of his or her actions. Etzioni's moderate deontology definitely includes a consideration of the consequences of behavior, but effects are nonetheless of secondary importance (MD 12-13).

In the neoclassical paradigm it is assumed that people want to maximize their own individual profits. That is the ethical concept of this school of thought, which is in no way free of values judgments. Socio-economics offers a counter-ethic that recognizes that people often make moral judgments about their own needs. In these cases, moral obligations become the cause of behavior, and are therefore genuinely effective. "For example, people save not merely to consume in their older age but also because they believe it is indecent to become dependent on the government or on their children. And people pay taxes not merely because they fear the penalties, but also because they consider their government to be a legitimate institution" (MD x).

Apparently, the wishes of real humans cannot be reduced to the pursuit of material goods alone, as many people also have a heartfelt desire to live according to their own moral values. At this point one can still use neoclassical thought, and its concept of multifarious individual preferences, to explain these sorts of desires: Ideals can simply be considered preferences; hence one might spend money to pursue these ideals, just as people spend money to purchase other luxury goods such as fur coats. Whoever prefers whole-wheat bread on ecological grounds, or fair-trade coffee for moral reasons, simply pays a bit more. But socio-economics goes a step further and presents the thesis that prices alone cannot convincingly order or regulate desires. In fact, people do not search for the most efficient and rational means of reaching their

goals, they choose "means largely on the basis of emotions and value judgments, and only secondarily on the basis of logical-empirical considerations" (MD xi).

A lot of human behavior speaks for this irrationality. For example, the fact that there are people who still smoke twenty years after the striking evidence of the dangers of smoking was released, that people continue to pay stockbrokers for useless advice, and that some still buy over-priced life insurance. But, as it is also the case that each sort of behavior exhibits its own degree of rationality, socio-economics must also analyze the factors and causes of this irrational behavior. Many even believe "that drawing on emotions and on value judgments is […] an effective, not a distorted, way of making choices and rendering effective decisions (MD xi). This is a useful approach because it allows people to utilize shortcut procedures when gathering all existing information is not an option that is within one's reach, or would require one to bear inappropriate costs. According to neoclassical economics, such rules of thumb are a typical means of behaving rationally without employing a long period of deliberation (MD 166 and following pages). Etzioni rejects this idea because there is no evidence that rules that are passed on collectively can be considered rational. Likewise, at the state level, in society, or in large bureaucracies there is just as seldom a genuine process of selection by means of competition. Thus, institutionally congealed rules can ensure the maintenance of irrational patters of behavior for a very long time. Often, such rules or institutional arrangements even contradict one another. Good schools do not push bad schools out of the market, and some well-run nursing homes are located near very bad ones. For most organizations there is not even a competitive market. Furthermore, there are even a number of situations in which evolution only leads to local, sub-optimal selection; thus in no way producing the best rules or arrangements (MD 180). When this happens to be the case, we must search for new procedures in order to make larger organizations and community structures amenable to rational analysis.

Who actually makes most decision choices? According to neoclassical theory it is always the individual. Socio-economics, on the other hand, maintains that people are usually parts of a social collective, which has a lasting effect on individual decisions. One could go even further: "Free individuals, able to render relatively rational decision-making, are found only within communities, because only in such communities do people find the psychic and social support that […] is required to

sustain decisions free of pressures from the authorities, demagogues, or the mass media. Individuality does exist, but only within these social contexts" (MD xi).

Hence, the market is no longer the all-encompassing interpretation paradigm. Rather, markets and trade relationships are much more likely to be viewed as the subsystems of a context that includes the state, society, and culture. "These contexts determine to a large extent whether or not the market is given sufficient freedom to be efficient, or granted too much liberty," (MD xi) which would undermine the fundamental social context.

In the neoclassical paradigm it is also assumed that businesses and other economic actors have no power over the market, but must instead follow the dictates of market laws. By contrast, socio-economics recognizes the central role of power. Socio-economic theory acknowledges that "*no exchange occurs among equals* but that one or more parties have a power advantage" (MD xii). We are therefore dealing with a revitalization of political economy, which takes context into account, and grants the state a significant role so that it can compensate for given power imbalances, for example. But the term "political economy" is dismissed because it "has been associated with the works of neo-Marxists and other economists of a similar political persuasion not shared by the author" (MD 15). There are also other concerns. This term dates from a time, before specialization within the field of economics, when political economy was still a respected part of social philosophy. Socio-economists support interdisciplinary cooperation, but do not want collaboration to force them to give up "complexity advantages" that are achieved by means of differentiation. The goal of socio-economics is not to merge economics with social sciences, but to integrate economics into a general theoretical system that is capable of summarizing the results of special research in a logical manner (MD 15). It would be completely unreasonable to try to completely replace neo classicism with a counter theory. The hundreds of thousands of hours of hard work that were invested in the development of this paradigm and its results – which were often quite impressive – make it clear that replacement is not an option. Instead, we must find a trans-disciplinary bridge that can bring together theories on the market place, the state and society.

In the field of socio-economics, a social group is not a simple collection of individuals, but types of organizations that have their own structures. In this case, sociology's structuralist view is combined with the individual-centric view found in

economics. However, Etzioni does criticize the tendency of sociologists to utilize an "over-socialized" perspective. This perspective is very apparent in Durkheim's major work on the division of labor, but also forms the basis of Talcott Parson's sociology, and the political theory of Leo Strauss. While the economists teach us how one chooses, this type of sociology teaches us that we do not have a choice (MD 7). The concept of "responsive community," on the other hand, tries to do justice to both individuals and communities. It is the search for middle ground between Thomas Hobbes' assumption that the threat to security is so high that we must subject ourselves to rule beneath a Leviathan, and John Locke's theory that, according to nature, all rights lie in the hands of individuals; who can decide whether or not they will pass some of these rights on to a community. "Individuals and community are both completely essential, and hence have the same fundamental standing" (MD 9). Here lies the fundamental tension that is present in socio-economics. Etzioni's thesis is that societies are bearable only as long as the balance between these two elements, between the I and the We, can be maintained. "The position advanced here represents a middle course that has been evolving between the two 'ideal types' positions of enlightenment and romanticism, although it is closer to the romantic pole than to that of enlightenment" (MD 14). In some ways, the inclusion of factors that Etzioni refers to as normative-affective is "romantic." Hereby he means the feelings of obligation that people have in relation to an inner moral and an emotional world, that is formed by the communities that they are members of.

In this manner socio-economics introduces a few other variables to the theory. In the "age of advanced computers and artificial intelligence," we can come to terms with this if we can use this theory to explain more than would be possible when using simpler, but less comprehensive theories (MD 17). A primary problem of neoclassical economics is that it has difficulties explaining non-egoistic human behavior. The argument that they receive pleasure because "they did the right thing" seems tautological. Presents can only be explained by the expected quid pro quo. Anonymous presents cannot be explained. For socio-economics on the other hand, it makes complete sense to assume the existence of behavior that stems from feelings of moral obligation; and to describe social factors that enable such behavior, as well as factors that thwart it. It is difficult to use neoclassicism to explain why people vote even though the effort this entails is not at all matched by the small difference that one single vote makes amongst many hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of votes. In

fact, political scientists very carefully studied this phenomenon and asked, amongst other things, whether voter turnout depends on the expected closeness of an election. This correlation does exist, but only to a very small degree. Most people vote regardless of expectations about election results, as long they feel that the differences between the parties are important enough (MD 62). Neoclassicists are just as unable to explain why people do not always cheat when no one is watching (MD 58). Moreover, in the most cases people tend to cooperate with other people without being forced to do so or paid for their efforts (MD 60).

It can also be demonstrated that moral behavior cannot be explained by referring back to a system of stimulations or expected benefits (MD 67 and following pages); they can be explained much more reliably by referring to attitudes, which are determined by a person's socialization and his or her social environment. Besides the relationship between costs and benefits, we must also take into consideration "the formation of preferences […] via moral education, peer culture, community values, and the mobilization of appropriate public opinion, factors that neoclassicists tend to ignore because they take preferences for granted, and their theories provide no analytical framework to conceptualize the ways in which preferences are formed and might be reformed " (MD 242). But socio-economists do also recognize how difficult it is to quantify these factors. "They may have to be synthesized, made more parsimonious and more operational, before they can effectively play their role next to economic analysis" (MD 242). That is the task of the annual international conference of the "Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics." This new paradigm needs to be further developed in order to be truly capable of challenging neo-liberal thought, which itself has grown to be not only an economic theory concept, but more and more often "affects the way people see their world and themselves, and the way they behave" (MD 250).

In a few areas the potential practical advantages of socio-economics can at least be outlined, even if this paradigm has not yet reached maturity: Moral obligations reduce transaction costs,[46] because one can rely on contracts and business partners, thereby avoiding the need for multiple protections, and the high-priced

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[46] These are the extra costs that arise as a result of an economic transaction, e.g. the bank fees for a remittance and the certification costs that one incurs when buying a house.

guarantees, deposits, or notary costs these protections imply (MD 254). In some areas such as constitutional rights or adoption moral obligations can create zones that are free of markets or market influences – places where purely profit-oriented exchange is hindered. One can use socio-economics to demonstrate that competition cannot perpetuate itself because there is a tendency towards cartels and monopolies. Competition must be repeatedly bolstered by external measures. One preliminary finding is that excessively strong social ties impede competition, while ties that are too weak lead to destructive social conflicts. Relationships of moderate strength are the most conducive to free competition (MD 256). The state has the task of defending the rules of competition in order to support competitiveness and prevent violence. But the state must in no way attempt to predetermine the results of competition. Because competitors try to use the state to pursue their own special interests, limiting the influence that competitors may have upon the state is very important. The argument that various interest groups hold each other in check is, namely, a falsehood. Instead, they tend to create solutions that are disadvantageous to less organized third parties. Stronger pressure from interest groups leads to an increase in the money that must be distributed at the expense of taxpayers or poorly organized consumers; despite the fact that the state, being a collective good, ought to defend consumer rights and not the interests of small but powerful interest groups (MD 217 and following pages).

In summarizing it can be said that socio-economics is a very promising new approach. Amartya Sen has played an especially convincing role in returning a moral dimension to the economy, without relying on the outmoded paradigms of the moral sciences. The Nobel Prize, which Sen received in 1998, clearly shows that the neo-liberal paradigm has long since lost its place as the sole ruler of economic theory. A prescriptive economic theory, lacking any nostalgia for the past, is now taking shape.

8. Winning Without War

Shortly after the high point of the cold war, the Cuba Crisis of October 1962, Etzioni presented a concept of small steps that would bring about a gradual transformation of the bipolar world. Etzioni called this the "gradual way to peace." The point was to give the other side signals by taking unilateral steps. In this manner, a measure of trust

was to be established without resorting to spectacular confrontations and by foregoing, at least temporarily, disarmament negotiations that were overloaded with expectations.

According to Etzioni's analysis, America's earlier use of a confrontation-based strategy of containment in relations with the Soviet Union had led to a dead end. The goal was to force the Russians to capitulate. But this only led to the atomic stalemate of the early sixties. Essentially, the strategy of deterrence only served as a means of winning time until the Soviet block eventually broke apart or thawed. In the meantime, the Western sphere of influence was to be secured and the eastern sphere was to be left alone (WWW 27). This bipolarity led to the freezing of existing spheres of influence. And, it also preserved the existing state of affairs, rather than opening up ways of overcoming the cold war. Tactically this strategy was somewhat successful, but strategically it also led to a perpetuation of the existing situation, meaning that all would remain as it was. Essentially, this was a strategy of intransigence. At the beginning of the nineteen sixties there were only a few experts who still believed that the Soviet Union would fall apart from the inside out – the economic upswing of the fifties and the successes of the Russian space program since Sputnik had deeply upset this belief.

In his analysis of the Soviet Union, Etzioni found that its foreign policy was still expansionistic in its disposition, but that neither Stalin nor his successors were prepared to risk revolutionary achievements to pursue a course of expansion. Therefore the Soviet Union was more interested in using the communist parties of other countries to pursue its own national interests than in exporting world revolution (WWW 36 and following pages). This led to a style of politics that was based on limited risk taking and virtually insignificant aid packages to "brother parties."

It was politically important, according to Etzioni, that Soviet expansionism be offered the chance to develop itself by means of ideological and political competition. The ideal model would exclude military means and alter perceptions of the opposing side so that it would be perceived as a competitor rather than an enemy. Additionally, both sides would have to agree upon procedural regulations, especially the ruling out of the use of force. Both parties would also have to create an apparatus that would be capable of effectively enforcing a shared set of rules. The idea of creating such an apparatus was undoubtedly the weakest part of this concept. Etzioni envisioned the use of UN-Observers, who would have to be subdued in the event of an attack. Even

at this point in time people were quite aware that this plan could offer no obstacle, and that observers (as the name itself implies) will look on passively if they do not have sufficient weapons or a clear assignment – or will simply step aside when faced with a determined attacker, as has happened during many wars in the Middle East.

Thus, the goal was a movement away from dualism towards competition. Challenges, which were especially likely to take place in the numerous third world countries that had recently gained independence, were to be dealt with by means of non-military measures alone. The complete elimination of the conflict and system enmity seemed unlikely and utopist, but it did seem possible to transform relations so that they would be competitive in nature rather than hostile. This change required the introduction of arms limits and arms controls in order to regulate and channel antagonisms, and reduce the risk of military conflict.

"The issue is not whether the Soviets tried to spread their way of life to other peoples, but what means they used to pursue this end. What counts is not the difference between expansion and standstill, but the distinction between the armed and peaceful pursuit of a personal set of values" (WWW 279). But this quote also highlights one of this strategy's weaknesses. Etzioni believed that the US ought to make reforms possible in the third world by supporting democratic governments and toppling right-wing regimes. However, there is no discussion of what measures would be taken to prevent the Soviet Union from furthering its own aims of world revolution by interfering in – and, if necessary, employing military measures – to influence the course of coups d'état or political disorder. Etzioni argued that competition based on peaceful means should rely on interests rather than good will or trust. It is important that the transformation process be divided into numerous small steps. "By taking one small step at a time, you allow room for experimentation. Does the other side meet its obligations as well? Does it dismantle its weapons, too?" (WWW 280). Therefore this strategy does allow for unarranged unilateral steps, after which one awaits the other side's reaction. It is especially important not to underestimate symbolic gestures, as the goal of this process is to overcome irrational fears by laying psychological groundwork. For example, symbolic gestures helped bring about the abandonment of aboveground atom bomb tests.

But the next step is also extremely important, namely the creation of a global authority that is more than a law enforcement agency that maintains law and order. In order to strengthen its legitimacy by demonstrating its association with a fairer world,

this institution would have to at least take responsibility for developmental issues and aid programs. The basis for this organization would have to be a broadening sense of common goals that is similar to the feeling of community that began to develop during the early stages of Western European integration. Here we can already see the emergence of Etzioni's communitarian arguments. "A feeling of community will be the most reliable basis for international rules that limit competition to the use of peaceful means. The most stable foundation for laws that people abide by voluntarily is always a community that has created the laws that it promises to observe" (WWW 290). Thus measures must be implemented that help build a sense of community: a worldwide radio and television network, the use of satellites, youth and student exchanges, common space program, etc. The larger goal ought to be a common global economy. Etzioni interpreted the Soviet Union's purchases of US wheat, which took place at this time, as the first step in this direction.

Regional alliances, that are not only political and military, but are also economic in nature, can play an important role in this process. Open organizations, that are prepared to accept new members, are better than closed communities. If possible, they should also transcend political blocs. Of course, in the nineteen sixties there was not yet a precedent-setting example of this sort of alliance.

For Etzioni the overall goal of this concept is "winning without war." The engrained division of the world into two parts was to be overcome by replacing military confrontation with peaceful economic competition. Although the nineteen eighties introduced a few more complex factors into the game, Etzioni's strategic precognition of 1989 is very apparent:

"The next time that trumpets sound, they may signal a new type of victory, not the victory of one people over another, humans over humans, but the victory of people over fear and bombs, starvation and plagues, violent rulers and police terror. The Americans have known for generations that competition is not an instrument that one participant uses to subjugate another, but a challenge to all. In the end, competition encourages values that are of more use to all participants when it does not make each and every individual richer. The victory of peaceful competition will not be the triumph of one nation or bloc, but the triumph of a long-lasting peace, social justice and freedom; and these can win without war." (WWW 322).

There was certainly an excessive hope that everything would turn out perfectly well after this conflict had come to an end. This shows to what large degree the cold war displaced one's perception of all other conflicts. Nevertheless, the massive atomic threat, which could have triggered a catastrophe as a result of any mistake at any time, has now been reduced to a minimum. And, all in all, this outcome seems to have proven how astonishingly correct Etzioni's expectations turned out to be. However, this strategy was certainly not free of risk. Indeed, in the end the losing side could have grown frustrated, thrown all cares aside and resorted to violence; the attempted coup in Russia, in 1991, clearly reflected this possibility. This time, Etzioni's idea that the losers also retain an advantage has been true for the people of the former USSR and the former Soviet member states as well. But the Soviet Union itself has completely disappeared from the map. The political and military powers of the leaders who associated themselves with the USSR could only be kept under control because of expected personal advantages, luck, skilful diplomacy and the leaders' own recognition of the hopelessness of their situation.

9. Conclusion

Etzioni supports an enlightened remoralization of civil society. Individuals should no longer be left alone as shivering atoms in the cold world of neo-liberalism. Instead, they should organize their self-determination in responsive communities. This approach is enlightened because it does not support traditional, paternalistic morality. In this manner the moral components of social science and political consulting are reinforced.

The process of globalizaiton requires a social theory that has global effectiveness; more so than any other approach, Etzioni's meets this condition because it seeks a third way that lies between group-related particularism and anonym universalism. If the failure of economic globalization due to increasingly protectionist defensiveness and resistance by the victims of modernization is not a desirable outcome, then the cultivation and reinvention of communities – including

communities that are global and transcend boundaries – is not only an attractive goal that has socio-utopian elements, it is also a practical necessity.

First and foremost, Etzioni analyzes society's sociological features. He is not a political scientist. Although he provides political consulting, all of the strategies that he has proposed and proposes have social self-organization as their central focus. Neither is he an economist, as his socio-economics basically aims at embedding economic theory in sociology. Sociology is a universal discipline that must concern itself with the reintegration of diversified and increasingly specialized scientific disciplines. In relation to society, all other systems are to be considered subsystems only. This is equally true of the scientific disciplines that belong to these subsystems. Unlike his contemporary Jürgen Habermas, Etzioni is also not a political intellectual; he is a socially oriented political activist who has made his considerable economic, organizational and intellectual abilities available to practical, public activities. An excellent way of highlighting this difference is to consider the issue of war and peace. Habermas presented a belated political-moral justification of NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999. Etzioni on the other hand, presented his gradualist peace plan for the cessation of the cold war in 1964, making this a future oriented proposal. Etzioni is a strategist, Habermas is more of a commentator. This comparison is in no way intended to play down a commentator's role, as it is absolutely essential.

Habermas complains of the colonization of the life-world by differentiated social systems. In this point Habermas's opinion does not differ much from Etzioni's, but Etzioni chooses concepts that are more closely related to practical experience. Most importantly, he replaces critique with action. A civil society – made up of "communities" – should assume its role as a third social force that exists along side the state and the market. What is crucial is that these communities be organized and that they, despite having been discredited by individualistic thought, which considered itself modern, regain social-moral legitimacy.

Moral arguments should count for something again. Of course, they cannot win recognition everywhere. The initiatives for the restriction of political corruption in the US are confronted with the same limits time and again: that the very people who receive money illicitly, namely congress members, block necessary and appropriate anti-corruption legislation. The mobilization of public opinion is not adequate because scandals tend to hold the public's attention for only a short period of time, and the emotional state of excitement that they provoke tends to wear off

quickly. Public opinion is erratic and can be repeatedly and strategically manipulated by interest groups. Etzioni explains, in very clear terms, that only the creation of an enduring social movement can help in this matter. The experiences of the civil rights movement and the women's and environmental movements have shown that this is the only strategy that is fairly promising and can be used to bring about change.[47] Etzioni's historical model is the US "Progressive Movement" that lasted from 1900 till 1917. This was a political-social reform movement that included both major parties. It set as its goals the removal of social injustices, political reforms, environmental protection and the public control of important branches of the economy. In 1913, this movement managed to introduce a constitutional amendment that drastically changed the US Senate – an institution that, until this time, was known as a millionaires' club. The right of state parliaments to appoint senators was revoked so that senators could be voted into office by direct public elections that were to be held in each state.[48] The important goals of this movement included the break up of trusts and monopolies and the suppression of special interests. Even the laws that formed the basis for the 2000 court decision against Microsoft can be traced back to this social movement.

Etzioni still considers this movement a shining example, despite the fact that the "Progressive Movement" was very nationalistic, while modern communitarianism must develop an anti-corruption movement that has a global impact. Election campaign financing is currently the largest impediment to democracy in the US; and the best way for special interest groups to have their particular wishes fulfilled. Therefore important goals must include the public financing of election campaigns together with measures designed to stop, or at least drastically limit, the flow of money from the private economy to certain political representatives. Efforts must also be made to reduce the costs of election campaigns (for example, by making access to

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[47] Cf. Etzioni, Amitai: "Toward a Neo-Progressive Movement" in: idem, *Public Policy in a new key*. New Brunswick/London 1993, pp. 127-140, especially p. 135. Cf. also: idem, *Capital Corruption*: *The New Attack on American Democracy*, New Brunswick 1988.

[48] In 1912, during Theodor Roosevelt's presidency, there was even a "progressive party" that broke off from the Republican Party; but it was only able to win five million votes.

broadcasting time a legal right, and by limiting the lengths of campaigns or the total sum of money that a candidate may spend) and register lobbyists. Last but not least, there must be an effective application of old and new laws that have already been enacted. Instead of allowing politicians to continue ruling in the name of big money, an old law should be reintroduced: one person, one vote. The historical example that the "Progressives" set shows that such a movement is both conceivable and possible.

For Etzioni, who had to flee from the Nazis together with his parents, the Holocaust is an important topic. His grandmother, who lived together with his family in Palestine, committed suicide when she heard of the deaths of relatives who had been placed in concentration camps. Of Etzioni's extended family members, 25 died in concentration camps: all of his aunts and cousins on his father's side, including a pair of deaf twins, as well as two of his mother's sisters, their husbands, and their children. In his speech, Ending the Night, which he held on November 9, 1998 in St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt, Germany, he discussed whether, after so many years, the matter of responsibility could be considered closed. Are young Germans, who were born after 1945, still in any way jointly responsible? Etzioni immediately expands this question: "I speak not oft the relatively small number of living Germans who were adults sixty years ago and who were involved themselves (…). I speak of their children, and their children's children, a rapidly growing proportion of the German people. Can one, in justice, blame them, hold them accountable, for what has happened? This is not just a question for Germany, although it particularly concerns Germans. Americans also ask themselves the same tantalizing questions about slavery, the treatment of Native Americans, and of the Vietnamese. So do other nations – or at least they ought to."[49]

If collective guilt can be assumed at all, then it would only apply to those who were of a certain age when the crimes were committed. Inherited guilt, on the other hand, according to Etzioni, cannot be presumed. There is something similar to a community-wide responsibility for people who are born into a "community" and share its history, memories, identity, achievements and shortcomings. We have no choice but to share the burdens of our community – just as we share in its glory. In place of guilt, Etzioni would like to use the word responsibility, which does not weigh upon individuals, but can and should be actively accepted by each member of a

[49] Etzioni, Amitai: "Ending the Night," 11/09/1998 (Manuscript).

community. A completely developed human being cannot be a private person alone; rather, he or she must somehow relate to a social community. Speaking about the 1938 *Reichskristallnacht* (Night of the Broken Glass), on the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary, Etzioni draws the following conclusions: That it is necessary to respond early on, before a regime of terror has taken root. One must take action when – or, preferably, before – the first opposition leader disappears or the first synagogue has gone up in flames. Etzioni also applies the "Broken-window theory" – which stems from new criminal research – to these examples: Turning a blind eye to and ignoring small offences against humanity invites others to do the same. Once one window has been broken, when disorder and feelings of unease have captured public space, when a society simply accepts the discrimination of minorities – these are sure signs that worse violations will be tolerated as well.

Etzioni refers to the fact that, after 1945, Germany was able to build up a strong civil society within the period of one generation, while relying on only a few forerunners from the years prior to 1933. Thus, this development is also proof that a country can change its public culture, not least by means of citizen education, which has become an integral part of German education and has even come to play a role in the training of German soldiers. In Etzioni's opinion, Japan, Austria and Poland, on the other hand, still have a good deal of work to do in order to come to terms with their histories.

To talk of "normalization" seems too simplistic to him, as this could just as well mean a return to the *Realpolitik* of a stereotypical nation-state. Germany would do better to take countries such as Canada as an example, which has participated in all of the UN peacekeeping missions to date, or the US, which has, for example, seen it as its responsibility to act as a mediator in the conflict in Northern Ireland. He advises the German government to encourage the creation of an unarmed, volunteer "Genocide Prevention Corps" and to contribute the most volunteers. Members of such a unit, trained in the techniques of non-violence, would attempt to place themselves between opposing factions. In case of direct attack – in this matter Etzioni is enough of a realist – the Prevention Corps would have to be able to rely on armed UN troops that would ensure their protection. But this raises the question as to whether there would really be volunteers who would be willing to rely on the protection of hesitant or unreliable UN troops when confronting determined bands of murderers. Etzioni believes that it would be inappropriate for Germany to behave as if it were just

another normal country. By fighting genocide and supporting the construction of civil societies, Germany could definitely take on the role of a leader. In this manner, responsibility for the past would be more than sorrow and self-criticism alone – it would mean engaging in genuine action as well.

Suggestions such as these are typical of Etzioni's work. It is not like him to limit himself to an academic analysis of a given topic, nor is Etzioni likely, on certain occasions, to hold the expected speech on ethnic reconciliation. His ideas almost always return to a discussion of practical implications, even if these threaten to be more than his audience can handle. But upon closer examination it becomes clear that each idea is practice and problem-oriented – not utopian, but feasible.

Interview with Amitai Etzioni

Question: There are a few things I would like to know about your biography. Do you have any recollection of your early years in Germany?

Answer: I left Germany when I was five years old, so I have very few memories. The main memory I do have is that my grandparents took me for a walk in the Schwarzwald: there was a fire and suddenly two trucks drove up that were full of Hitlerjugend who tried to help fight the fire. My grandparents got really scared and we ran down a hill, but I did not understand what was happening. I can just remember how scared they were. That is about all I remember.

Qu. I believe you left Germany in 1935, when were seven years old. Did you then go directly to Palestine?

Answer: No, we got stuck for a year, oddly enough in Athens, because in those days you needed a permit, which was called a certificate, to go to Palestine. The British were controlling immigration, and there was some mix up. We got the certificate of another family, and they received ours. The British were not at all keen to have more immigration, so it took them a year to process everything. So, I left Germany in 1935 and I got to Israel, to Palestine that is, in 1936.

Qu And then either you or your parents choose a new name for you. Why the name change and what do the names Amitai and Etzioni mean?

Answer: No, my parents never changed their names. The whole Israeli idea was to rebel against the past. The Israelis considered the Jews weak intellectuals and bankers, and the idea of Israel was to gather together strong people who could work on the land. Jews spoke the languages of the lands in which they had lived and the Israelis spoke Hebrew. So this was all an attempt to make a new break with the past. In effect, they usually would talk about reversing the past. The phrase was, turning the pyramid on its head. Changing names to Hebrew was part of this process of breaking with the past. Not just my name was changed; practically everyone's name was changed. Golda Meierson became Golda Meir, and so on. In Hebrew all names have a meaning. There are no names in Hebrew which are neutral. My first name means "truth" and appears in the Old Testament. My last name comes from a word that means "tree" in Hebrew.

Question: And then you grew up in a kibbutz?

Answer: No, in a different kind of settlement. In Israel there were settlements of various degrees of communality. The kibbutz represented the highest degree of commonality where everything was commonly held – you shared everything from cups to food. There were also cooperative villages of varying degrees. I myself grew up in a cooperative village. We had our own land, but shopping was shared, as was the sale of produce. But it was much less communal than a kibbutz. I grew up with a constant debate about the tension: not between the state and the market, because these were social groups, but between degrees of privatization versus communization. This was actually my first introduction to communitarian issues and this debate was one of the things which sensitized me to these issues. One of my major thoughts about this is that some of the early communitarians, Tönnies or Nisbet, some of the Asian communitarians or the communitarians of the eighties, were so strongly interested in community, that they forgot about the other side of the coin; they let the liberals talk about individuality and rights, while they talked about duties and community. And our line of argument from the first day was all about rights and responsibilities, the I and we, the person in the community. And I think that is a very productive tension. And I am very worried when you have situations such as those in Japan where people are subsumed by the community, not by the state. Or in the United States it's the opposite situation. So this whole idea of the need for balance stems from these early experiences.

Qu: These settlements were called "moshavs," correct?

Answer: Yeah, exactly.

Qu: I actually lived in a moshav for a short period of time. Could you show me your settlement on this map of Israel?

A. Here it is: Kfar Shemorion. Now it is a very fancy suburb of Tel Aviv, but in those days it was nothing, just a lot of rocks. There used to be no direct road to Tel Aviv. So that protected it. Once a direct road to Tel Aviv was built, a lot of ambassadors moved there and now live in fancy villas on the beach.

Q: I found out that you became a Young Socialist in 1944 and a member of the Mapai, the Labour Party's youth organization,

A: They were social democrats, by today's standards probably to the right of the German SPD [Social Democratic Party]. Even in those days there were communists in Palestine, and the communists were siding with the Arabs. If you grew up in Israel, it was thus absolutely natural to become anti-communist in an almost American style. The Jewish communists used to try to stop my bus on its way to school because they thought the Arabs were the proletariat. As you know, many of my colleagues, like Kristol or Lipset, and all these people, were fairly left in their youth. That is a problem I never had. From the beginning I grew up as a social democrat.

Q: Was the Mapai the party of working class Zionists?

A. Yes, but this is very difficult for people from other societies to understand. Israel was founded by the Social Democrats. As a result, the members of the establishment in Israel were also Social Democrats. So, for instance, Ben Gurion was the head of the Mapai. Our Labour Union, the Histadrut, was about the equivalent of the church in some other countries. The deviants were the business people. In Israel being a businessperson was like being a communist in the United States. You have to turn everything around – they were not rebellious, they were defining values. Therefore everything seems different. For forty years they were the number one social and political force.

Q. I am trying to determine the sources of communitarian ideas. One source was Martin Buber. Did he develop a socialist concept that includes personal rights, or should we consider him a utopian socialist?

Answer: He was utopian, but in a very different sense. What happened was this: When I was in the youth movement I was about fifteen, so that didn't mean very much. But when I was sixteen and a half, there was a fairly active Jewish underground that was trying to push the British out of Palestine. And at one point

2700 members of the underground were arrested on one Saturday. This was a very small community, and this meant that practically all the leaders, and members of what they called the "commando," were arrested. My group in school, including me, dropped out of high school and joined this underground. That was in 1946. We worked on projects such as blowing up British police stations and trying to sneak in immigrants from Europe. We then went directly into the Israeli war of independence, in which I participated intensively until 1949. After the war was over – it ended in 1949 but I was released on January 1, 1950 – I wanted to go to the Hebrew University to study, and they told me that I didn't even need to apply, because I didn't have a high school diploma. At that point I had no money, I couldn't go and study and I was fairly desperate. Actually, one of my strongest gut memories, which has often influenced my thinking, is that of being unemployed for three weeks. But the feeling of going and knocking on doors … - I was a warrior. Because I had written a lot about the war while fighting as a soldier, my articles had been published in a number of newspapers and war photographers had taken my picture. And here I was, two weeks after the war, and nobody would even give me a chance because I did not have a high school diploma. Suddenly, amidst all this, I saw an announcement that Martin Buber had opened a school for adult education teachers. He believed that adult education teachers had to be different than regular teachers. He was going to offer us a year of concern and everything if you came and studied there. So I rushed in there and I spent a year in very close contact with him, because there were only forty of us. That was his dream: He was fairly anti community and he thought of community as something inauthentic. In fact, there is a sociological term – the German sociologists call it a *bund*. A bund is much more intensive than a community: It is almost like a high, equivalent to the Cuban idea that you have to have a constant revolution in order for people to be honest and open. Buber would never have described it in these terms, but the idea is the same. So the moment you have an organization and a structure, it all becomes an inauthentic social entity, which he calls a community. It is the "it", because the "I" and the "I and We" exist only in moments of exhilaration, the moment when a high is reached. What I learned from him was the importance of dialogue – which really has nothing to do with socialism – the importance of treating people as ends and the importance of emotion. At that time, there were two traditions: one was the Chassidic and the other was more scholarly. He had written books on the

Chassidic tales, so he was very much into the emotional, uniting dialogue between different people. And that was what I learned from him: the importance of dialogue.

Q So community is much more of a secular version of the *bund*?

A …and a routinized version of it.

Q Later on you called Buber a master communitarian, but Ralf Dahrendorf, for example, writes about "Paths out of Utopia." Looking back from an American perspective, what do you think about the so-called socialist Zionism in Israel, which is a specific type of utopian socialism?

A There have been at least 150 attempts in the last century to create true communal villages. Zionists did it, and in the U.S. the Shakers, the Quakers, and all kinds of groups did it as well. They all failed. Amidst all this there is a lesson to be learned. Under very different historical circumstances, extremely different in fact, each attempt was unsuccessful. The Kibbutzim are all dying out. Sometimes they are still called Kibbutzim, but they have hired laborers in their factories, they take their children home, and so on. This makes it clear to me that the idea of excessive communalism is not compatible with human nature. I very firmly believe that beneath all these different cultures there is one human nature. Excessive communalism cannot be stabilized and shouldn't be, because it is not respectful of individual variety, autonomy and innovation. That's why the Japanese have such a hard time innovating. The typical Japanese phrase is: the nail that sticks out gets hammered down. In the last fifty years were we so worried about totalitarianism, communism and Nazis, that we paid insufficient attention to fundamentalists. Take Iran for example – there they try to force faith on you. I think that what one can learn from this is that excessive communalism is utopian in the bad sense of the term. Utopia was sometimes used to describe the kind of place you want to be in, but cannot reach. But there have also been descriptions of negative utopias, in *1984* for example. The one and only lesson from all of this is: you need to have systematic balance, and you need to anchor it.

Q Balance between the individual and the community?

A It is a much more complicated subject. If you look into the "Golden Rule," the relation between liberty and social order is very complicated. Up to a point, they are compatible, and then they become antithetical. So for instance, if you go to Moscow today, they have neither liberty nor order, they have chaos, which is very dangerous; people are afraid to walk on the street. If you want to introduce order to Moscow, you will have to introduce liberty as well, up to a point. And if you want to establish even

more liberty, you will undermine order. So my point is about inverting symbiosis. Up to a point they feed one another, and then they kill each other. And this is exactly the point where there is too much of one of the elements. But up to a point, it is not simply a zero sum game: when more emphasis is placed on community, there are less individual rights for us, and vice versa. The kind of person the liberals want exists only in a community. This is not antithetical. The reasonable person is not a freestanding individual or an atomized person. He or she is integrated in a non-overpowering community.

Q: So this is the social self that Charles Taylor talks about, correct?

A: That's right.

Q: Let's switch to a slightly different subject. The first book you published was the "Diary of a Commando Soldier." It was published only in Hebrew, but it is in the Library of Congress. Can you tell me about its content and also describe what you now think about the Israeli war of independence of 1948?

A Well, the book was written when I was 19 or 20, and I resisted all offers to publish it in English, because it contains the rumination of a very young person – someone who saw the war from the ground floor. I was a very low ranking commander. I wrote about my feelings when one of my fellow soldiers was killed, and about how we attacked one place and failed, and then attacked another place and won. Themes such as those in "All Quiet on the Western Front," but not something I want to see published today. In the book though, I wrote that we didn't hate the Arabs, that we indeed felt very bad about being at war with them, and that we hoped that we would one day be able to live with them in peace. The main thing I took out of this experience is the resistance, the abhorrence of violence. So when I went to Berkeley I was very popular with the students, up to the point when the weathermen [one of the first terrorist organizations of the student movement] came. There was all this talk about how "You have to crack eggs when you want to make omelets." And then we had the riots at Columbia University. A small group of faculty members placed themselves between the students, between the left and the right, to prevent violence. I had written these two books about peace, and became very active in the peace movement – first the anti nuclear movement and then the movement against the war in Vietnam – largely because I saw that violence almost never pays. Take a look at Kosovo, they kill each other like crazy. It is true, the political sciences will show, that this is a way of measuring your power, and you will even gain some advantages, but

compared to the misery you cause to children, families, and five hundred years of vengeance… I am so delighted that the United States is now trying to mediate in Ireland, and between Pakistan and India. It is one of the great secrets of the United States: it founded a post war order, but it plays the role of a moderator, and we don't dare to speak about this new order. We have not become the world's police force, but the world's mediator. That's wonderful, and that's what we need. When I gave my talk in the St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt, Germany, I said that Germany would be very good at showing how to build civic societies. My main lesson from the war was: violence is terrible. But, as for the justice of this war, I have no doubts, because there is no question that the [Israeli] community was attacked by about seven nations.

Q: Israel's independence would not have been possible without wining this war?

A Well, when you are attacked you defend yourself. But, that's a very interesting question. At that time the United Nations wanted a partition and wanted to create it by establishing some sort of federation. And you know what: that's what they talk about now. And so I'm not sure we needed fifty years of bloodshed. Now, I don't want to be sacrilegious: Jews needed a homeland, theoretically you could have put it in some other place like in Uganda, but [Palestine] was the historical place. But it is also a very sad lesson that you need so much killing and misery, in the end, to get to some compromise. The whole time the Arabs wanted to send us, all the Jews, back to where we came from – Golda Meir back to Detroit, etc. And some of the Jews wanted to drive them all into the sea or the Jordan, but neither could do either of these things. I think, with a little more historical foresight, much of this bloodshed could have been avoided.

Q I would like to have a more precise discussion of these questions of war and peace, because you take two approaches. One is the anti Vietnam War movement, and the other, which I would like to discuss first, is the anti missile movement. In 1964 you published the book "Winning Without War," which I read and found very interesting. My impression is that your point of view in that book is in line with traditional political realism, but excludes the use of violence. Do you think that the strategies you presented in this book were confirmed in 1989, with the downfall of the Eastern block?

A: Very good question. What happened, in those days, was: Some people wanted to have an arms race, and they basically argued that the more weapons both sides had, the less likely they would be to use them. This is the famous mutual suicide argument

– mutual terror. And then there were the pacifists, who wanted unilateral disarmament. That was it. You had a small group of pacifists, who everybody considered nuts, and arms racers. And I came in and said: We want to have mutual arms reduction, agreed. But not in the sense that we'll give up and we'll hope the Russians give up, too. We will agree and will slowly reduce our arsenals. For twenty years all the experts said that this was silly. I didn't understand that the only way you could prevent nuclear war was by having high piles all the time updated. This was because if you started to reduce arms, and somebody else hid a few nuclear weapons, they would gain such an advantage that they would beat you. Then in 1986, Reagan went to Reykjavik and said to Gorbachev: Let's start arms reductions. They were alone in the room and Reagan wanted to cancel everything. The staff had a heart attack – but on both sides. And when they came out, they said: No, No, he didn't mean it, but they couldn't turn back. Out of that came the START Treaty, which did exactly what I recommended. It was a multilateral, verified arms reduction treaty. Nobody wants to hear somebody else say, "I was right." So, on this issue, not a single person came to me and said, you know, how interesting, twenty years ago you had these ideas. And at that time, all the arms racers said, "it is not practical or idealistic, it's silly." And along came a Republican President and he did it.

Q As far as I can recall, in your book you even talked about anti missile defense, the idea that Reagan took up later. But I assume Reagan and his advisers never read your book

A. Certainly not. I should make a list of the things I should tell you. The idea of the first half of the strategy was that the tension was so high, the hostility, that Americans couldn't believe that they could talk to the Russians. So you first had to have some psychological disarmament, which you could achieve by means of very small, safe gestures such as letting some spy out of prison. This you could do unilaterally. But you could not reduce weapons unilaterally. We predicted that the Russians would respond. While it looked like we were trying to convince the Russians – we were actually trying to convince the Americans. And so we would make three, four, or five such small, unarranged gestures. And as a result there would be a reduction of tensions. Now Kennedy did this exactly. He gave a speech at an American university that was entitled "Strategy for peace," and within 24 hours Khrushchev reciprocated. Then Kennedy released a spy and the Russians immediately released a spy, too. Nothing was coordinated. And there were six or seven steps such as these. I did an

analysis of the response in the press. In the beginning the press was very suspicious: the Russians are planning on tricking us, they will only pretend as if they are reciprocating, but as they continued, some started writing about détente. That was very effective, and we began participating in an active effort to convince Kennedy to take a go at it. The strategy had two parts: unilateral reciprocal psychology followed by multilateral, verified and negotiated arms reductions.

Q Some political scientists believe that the Cold War ended in that era, in the 1960s, but others say, that it only ended in 1991, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

A I don't think the Cold War ended in 1963. There was a pause at this time, but once Kennedy was assassinated, the Cold War was quickly renewed. The strategy of the Reagan administration was to bankrupt the Soviet Union through arms races. I hate to say this, but there was something to it. The Soviet Union would have had to double its military budget to match us. Then they began investing more and more of their GNP in the arms race. That may have been one of the reasons they couldn't produce enough of the other stuff they needed. Certainly, I don't think the cold war ended in 1963 – but there surely was a pause.

Q Before I move on to the next issue, the Anti Vietnam War movement, I would like to come back to another question that I left out earlier: Why did you leave Israel in 1957 and move to the United States?

A Well, I had studied at the Hebrew University and got my B.A. and M. A. and I just wanted to go to Berkeley for one year to round off my studies. That's very common in Israel, going to another country to get a broader education. Then, before I knew it, I got a job offer at Columbia University, which in those days had the second best sociology department, and so I went there for one year. In fact, I remember very well that we never even unpacked our cases.

Q: There you became an assistant professor, and then a professor. So you were a part of Columbia's faculty during the sixties, and experienced the student unrests, the anti-Vietnam war movement and the civil rights movement first hand. Were these years your most intense period of personal political activism, or has your level of political activity increased with time?

A. What happened was, I arrived at Columbia University in 1958. The first thing I published in English was a review of a movie called "Hiroshima mon amour," which I used to make points against nuclear war. I was immediately taken aside by Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton, who used to be called the demi-gods of the

department. They told me I was a promising young man, they were very fond of me, but if I was going to continue this "social work," as they called it, I would have no future as a sociologist. Sociology was supposed to be a science. At that time there was another person there who was going to be excommunicated for the same sins, his name was C. Wright Mills. I took this all into consideration, and I said, look, I am going to lead two parallel lives. In one I will do my academic work, and in the other I will keep my public faith. So for two years I wrote a book which was very theoretical, but there were all kinds of normative messages in there, too. It was a comparative analysis of complex organizations. When they saw that they gave me tenure just two years out of school, which was rather quick. But at the same time, I continued to participate in the peace movement. By the way, there were two peace movements. One group was called the "Soviet likies," and the other was the western group. The "Soviet likies" paid me much more for my speeches because I was part of the non-likies-movement. In 1965 and in the years that followed I also wrote what I think is my best book, "The Active Society." And from then on I lead parallel lives. But I was able to keep busy. For instance, in 1973 I went to the Soviet Union to try to get Jews out of jail. I was also a member, for seven years, of the board of the "Americans for Democratic Action" and published a number of articles in the New York Times and other newspapers - so you are right, there was more visible action. The way I see it, I kept one foot in academia, and one foot in the public sphere. I even wrote a book against Project Apollo, called the "Moondoggle," which was, again, very much a political pamphlet.

Q: You just mentioned that the "Active Society" is your most important work. In this book you seem to adapt some of John-Maynard-Keynes' ideas to political science or sociology. For example, in the German translation, the idea of "societal guidance" sounds very Keynesian. They translated it by using the phrase "*gesamtgesellschaftliche Steuerung*," "comprehensive steering," which in those days was used to describe the activities of Karl Schiller and the Social Democrats. Nowadays Keynesian theory seems to be the most outdated concept in politics. Do you believe in the great wheelman or the "kybernetes"?

A: Frankly, until you asked me this question, I did not see a connection between Keynesian theory and my work, but I was very connected to cybernetics. So the social cybernetics which I tried to develop stated that one of the four conditions for successful social change is the true support of the people. Therefore it was not a top-

down concept. Yes, the elites would have their role, and the media, and so on, but if you could not mobilize people to join you – thus the importance of social movements – you would not be able to bring about change. I think I would not change a comma in the book, from that or any other viewpoint. Consider what happened in the eastern part of Germany: in part, the regime collapsed, but in part there was some kind of uprising, and we can debate about proportionalities – I know, you are very familiar with those parts of Germany, but I can give you as many examples as you want. Take a look at what happened in the United States: Let us start with something small: outlawing smoking in public places as compared to the prohibition. Prohibition was a top down approach. Some religious people got it in, but prohibition did not completely stop people from drinking; it created an enormous amount of corruption, and could not be sustained. Thus, the law was repealed. We then had a 25-year long dialogue on cigarettes, and we achieved a publicly held understanding that smoking in public is not acceptable. When we passed laws on public smoking in the US, unlike in France, these laws were completely self-enforcing. I travel a lot, and I have not seen one case in which someone threatened to call the police because someone was smoking where it wasn't allowed. People don't do that, and the most you have to say is: May I remind you… and that's enough… Why? This is a trivial example. But Robert Bellah described this very well. In fact, he used a wonderful phrase, the "Habits of the Heart." Take the environment for example. The environmental movement did not just get Nixon to pass some laws and create an agency. The environmental movement got people to change their habits of the heart. They live differently. That's guidance. Keynesianism, on the other hand, is a concept in which government economists are assigned the task of pulling levers and chains.

Q: It's top down.

A. It is very much top down. Actually, Keynesianism is not just top down - it's technocratic. This is because most people don't understand what economist talk about. That is my other major conflict with our brand of economists.

Q. You coined the concept of an "Active Society." In the years after 1989 the term civil society or civic society became very important. Would you say that the active society is the sort of civil society that people like Cohen, Arato, Seligman and others are talking about now?

A. I think it is very different. I'm not against civil society, it is just much too thin. In fact, one of the things I am going to send to you is an article I just published on the

good society in the Journal of Philosophy. There are all kinds of definitions, but in the end they talk about a society in which there is a voluntary sector between the state and the individual in which people talk to each other cordially. That's wonderful, but it is very thin. I talk about a society which can end alienation and inauthenticity, in which history responds to the people rather than dominating them. This is like talking about flies and elephants. Civil society is such a light, limited concept. And there is a very interesting fact, which for me highlights the whole situation: When civil society people talk about voluntary association, they do not make any distinctions. A clan can be an association – it is voluntary, nobody will force you to join it. We have an association of Black Muslims, we even have an association that believes in bombing abortion clinics, and then we have United Appeal, which raises money to fight cancer. So from the civil society viewpoint they are all voluntary associations and they all help encourage practice independence. From the "Good Society"-viewpoint they are not the same at all. Why? Because the good society is communitarian, because they believe there are shared virtues. The civil society is really a liberal concept in the classical liberal sense.

Q: There is another subject I would like to address: In 1972 you were in Paris and took part in a conference on Genetics. After that you wrote a book, "The Genetic Fix," which is the liveliest book on the matter that I have ever read. You proposed that some measures be taken. Later you never came back to this subject. What do you think today about regulating the genetic sciences?

A. Well, when I look back at the age of seventy, the only thing I regret is that I got bored too quickly. So this book, which I published in 1972, was written about 20 years too early – just like "The Active Society." I got some very nice reviews at that time, but only now is this all an issue. So again, very few people remember the analysis in "The Genetic Fix." And again, the analysis is really not much different from the analysis in "Active Society." My argument was, if the government tried to control these trends and wanted to sustain their control, it simply wouldn't work. These things cannot be controlled. If you prohibit it in Mexico, you can do it in Guatemala, or in Switzerland and so on. So you simply needed to relinquish control over things that do not need to be controlled. For example: we are particularly unhappy about the idea of using genetic engineering for reproductive purposes, but most of us think it is correct to use these procedures to cure diseases. The major issue at that time was choosing the sex of your child. This would be the beginning of a sort

of breeding. And this reminds many people of Nazi politics. But if you look at it in a cool way, and you say, why not? What is, in the end, our argument against that? I had a very hard time finding reasons why I would want to prohibit this, as it was unlikely to cause social disturbances. So the theory of guidance that this approach is built upon is very similar to the Active Society theory: that you need true participation to set new mores.

Qu: There is one problem: most of the innovations in the modern sciences are often not comprehensible for the broader public. So the public normally is some steps behind and might slow down scientific development. Isn't that a problem, especially when solutions are urgent, for example, as concerns the need to find medicines to help cure cancer, aids and other illnesses?

A. I don't know. That's a wonderful question, and I think somebody should do a major study about it. I'm not sure. For instance, we had a debate about cloning when this sheep, what was her name, about a year ago…

Q: … Dolly…

A. Yes, at that time people would say, oh, terrible, terrible thing. Eight months later, all the hysteria was gone. We are not allowed to put limitations on bio- and agricultural exports, the only thing we say, the only thing we object to, is cloning total human beings, but everything else… Again, I'm not even sure about this, but eight months is not a very long time for reaching shared understandings. I think the public cannot be involved in all the small print, but if you don't involve them, you get the very separation between the state and the community that backfires in the end. We are certainly not going to put these issues up to vote one by one: should we allow cloning or not. But I do think that we need to bring the public along. And I'm fairly certain that the public would not prevent every technological advance. In fact, I don't even think you could stop things by means of the public alone.

My book, it just came out this week, is on privacy. There are a lot of technical developments in privacy which the public succeed in holding off for three weeks. For instance Intel just came out with a computer chip, which allows you to identify your individual computer by number, which in effect completely destroys your privacy. There was a big outcry and they said, fine, fine, we are not going to do it. Then they said, well, we are going to put in a switch. When you don't like it, you can switch it off. Now you have to go inside your computer, find that chip, and so on.

Q. You talked about working on two levels: exact science and political activism. In 1989 you founded SASE, the Society for the Advancement of Socio Economics. Could you explain, in a few words, why you took this initiative?

A Well, I served in the White House as a senior advisor from 1979 to 1980. It was the last year of the Carter administration. In many ways it was very painful. But the most painful moment for me came when they became very concerned, in February 1980, about runaway inflation. Gold prices were zooming up, inflation was at 14%, headed to 20%. There was absolute hysteria, for a good reason. And economists, basically they said, we're going to call for a recession, because it is necessary to adapt to expectations. There was an interesting element in all this: people were buying more because prices were rising and they were sure that they would continue to rise. In order to reduce consumption the economists said: we're going to declare a recession. People's expectations will be broken, they will buy less, and inflation will end. My response was: No, that's not the way its going to work, because when people go to the supermarket and they see that prices are higher, the fact that some newspaper says that we are going to have a recession next year is meaningless. They just see people marking up the prices every day, so we had to do something radically different. It was me against five economists, and I lost. The economists won the day and I felt terribly inadequate, because I didn't have the theory, the arguments, the data to stop them, and so afterwards I decided I had to do something about it. So in 1987 to 1989 I was teaching at Harvard Business School and I was surrounded with economists, and I wrote a book, "The Moral dimension: Towards a new economics." I tried to show that the economists are empirically, theoretically, and morally bankrupt. That is easy, by the way. There is very little disagreement on this. For years, some of the very best economists, the Nobel laureate Leontieff, Lester Thurow for example – and other very distinguished economists – have written books showing that the mathematics is phony, the predictions don't hold and that it is an egotistical science. But you can't replace a theory with nothing. So I went to a meeting of behavioral economists. The meeting was a complete waste of time, because there some of the neoclassical economists were arguing with three others, and it was like Marxists arguing with Jesuits; there was no dialogue. So I came up with a tactical idea: The plan was to create an organization which really asked the neoclassicists to stay out. Only those of us who wanted to work on creating a different kind of economics would become members. We were not going to try to arrest neoclassicists. But, we did not want to

talk to them about what was wrong with their theory; we wanted to talk about the elements of our theory that might be correct. That was the reasoning behind the founding of the SASE.

Qu. First off, is Amartya Sen a member of this group? And secondly, do you think that by granting him the Nobel Prize the field of economics showed its approval for your initiative?

A. Sen was certainly one of our very first members. He was at the first meeting. He became an honorary fellow from day one and is a wonderful example of socio-economics at work. But he is not the only success story. When Herbert Simon got a Nobel laureate, the economists were livid; when Arthur Lewis got a Nobel laureate for his work on the economics and the culture of poverty, they went berserk; and the same was true when Albert Hirschman was honored. So there have been a number of founding fathers (unfortunately not many mothers) that have helped establish the ideas of the SASE. Thus, Sen is part of a long tradition. It is the American economists who are so crazy. The Nobel committee has many European members who are not so contaminated by the American mind set. But the most important thing is: the days of Thatcherism and Reaganism in the nineteen eighties represented the heyday of neoclassical economists. In the 1990s the communitarians rose, not because I did so much work, but because history called, and continues to call, for a new kind of economics.

Question: So these two movements are starting to come together?

Answer: Correct.

Question: In 1990 you founded the communitarian movement, which I believe was your most successful initiative to date. You managed to start it with only a handful of people and a small office. How did it turn out so well?

A. I'm not saying this to be modest: The timing was right. The circumstances were demanding it. Refer back to other movements. Consider, for example, Betty Friedan's establishment of the feminist movement. There had been books written on feminism 20 years beforehand, but things didn't take off because the historical conditions were not ripe. We rose as we did because there was an enormous moral vacuum. And the only groups who were speaking on moral issues were the extreme right, the religious right. And people who care about values – two thirds of Americans care very strongly about values – they are dying for a democratic answer. When I was in the eastern part

of Germany there was also this desire. They don't just want the church, the state, or the market. There was a thirst for new ideas and it took off.

Q: In Germany I analyzed the reactions of the political parties and other organizations to communitarian ideas: they all responded positively to communitarianism, but seemed to be concerned that family values, traditional work ethics and the return to communities are conservative ideas; that communitarianism seemed to represent a mixture of conservativism and social democratic ideas. So they are sympathetic but a bit distanced. What would be your response to these concerns?

A: First of all, there are many types of families. In a conservative family the husband works and the wife stays home. And as our Baptists said: they should graciously submit to their husbands. But what we talk about is a peer marriage in which the wives and the husbands have the same rights and the same responsibilities. We have been fighting for the right of fathers to take a leave of absence when they have a child, which, for a while, only the mothers could get. So our vision of families and peer marriage is very different from the conservative definition of a family. Also, I strongly favor helping families rather than forcing people to stay in marriages. The conservatives' number one goal is to use the state to enforce values. And our number one priority – at least in my brand of communitarianism – is to support moral dialogues in order to encourage and help people. It is very interesting that the state of Louisiana just passed a very communitarian law that has established two types of marriages. There is the usual marriage you can put through in a minute, but there is also a marriage based on what I referred to as "supervows" in an article I wrote for Time Magazine in 1993. To take supervows you need to go to counseling before you get married, because you might find that you are not compatible. The state does not coerce people to do this. People voluntarily participate in marriage counseling and may have a better marriage as a result. So for me this is a very important sign. I don't want to pursue the goals the conservatives have in mind: coerce people or establish inequalities. So I think our concept of family is very different. But in Germany I've observed a slightly different situation. There were initially a lot of misunderstandings. People said much worse things: they said that we are authoritarians. They even used the word *Volksgemeinschaft* to describe our efforts. But consider for example the speech Rudolf Scharping prepared for our Geneva conference, which we published in the Responsive Community: He said the Social Democrats should meet the communitarians half way. Or look at what Kurt Biedenkopf and the Mayor of

Cologne say. There are a lot of people who are communitarians even if they do not care to show their badges. Our biggest supporter, oddly enough, was always Joschka Fischer from the environmental movement. He was the first who introduced me to the media in Bonn, invited 200 people and so on. I'm not at all sorry that we speak to all parties. These are not partisan ideas.

Q. Where do you think communitarian ideas have had the most impact, in Britain perhaps?

A. Well, we have had the greatest impact in the United States, but we have had the most official recognition in Britain. This is because when Blair changed Clause No. 4 of the party from nationalization to community, this really became part of the official British Labour platform. It was also a very important part of his election campaign. But I also met with Paddy Ashdown, the head of the Liberal Party, and he is a die-hard communitarian. And I worked a lot with David Willis, a left Tory. Officially we have had the most recognition in Britain. But Clinton, half the time, is also very communitarian, and Hilary's book "It takes a village" all the same.

Q. You spoke about the re-acadamization of communitarian ideas. What do you mean by that?

A. First of all I would like to say that I have an enormous amount of respect for Charles Taylor and his contributions, and I believe that Michael Sandel has made large contributions as well. But in Germany, as in many places, when people talk about communitarianism, the ideas are all from the 1980s. This is just not correct. Whatever you say about Tönnies and Durkheim, they were talking about exactly these issues. Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft – what could be more relevant? Robert Bellah and Philipp Selznick made very important contributions. But, in effect, in the communitarian writings of the eighties there is not a single footnote that refers to any of the authors I've just mentioned. By the way, they older authors never called themselves communitarians, because they knew that there were other groups, the Asian communitarians, the authoritarian communitarians. This makes things more complicated. Tönnies may have had some listening. And Robert Nisbet, you know. But to ignore all this! Our ideas do not stem from the nineteen eighties alone, we based them on the works of the early social scientists and, of course, from Buber. But initially, we did take them from the campus to the larger community. This had a very interesting effect that I had not expected. Suddenly there was an enormous rejuvenation of communitarian thinking on university campuses. There were new

books and articles in the law reviews. Scores and scores of articles have been written from a communitarian perspective. And the most recent development in law is the rediscovery of things such as social norms, which is wonderful news.

Q. Judging by the tradition of your personal political activism you are more of a liberal. What do you think about the debate between liberalism and communitarianism that is being held in many university courses?

A. Well, one of the curses of intellectual thinking is dichotomization. You have to be either for community or for the individual. I know I can't stop the ocean. Intellectuals have to be able to deal with gradations. Some of the classical liberals are such gun-holding libertarians that they are not willing to see the rich connection between liberty and community. If you look at the period that created Hitler, the destruction of the social fabric clearly was a factor. Free people do not live as isolated individuals. If they could just accept this fact alone, this "liberal or community"-debate would come to an end. In fact, we are beginning to do so now. Now Philipp Selznick calls himself a liberal communitarian, and so on.

Q. Would you also call yourself a liberal communitarian?

A. There are two ways of interpreting this. One is to say that within liberalism there is a communitarian branch. The other is, that within communitarianism, there are conservative communitarians and there are liberal communitarians. I consider myself a communitarian liberal, but not a liberal who has communitarianism as a side dish.

Q. Professor Etzioni, Thank you very much for this conversation.

(The interview was conducted by Walter Reese-Schaefer in Washington, Feb. 26, 1999)

Abbreviations

AS	The Active Society. A Theory of Societal and Political Processes, New York und London 1968
BU	Martin Buber und die kommunitarische Idee, Wien 1999
MD	The Moral Dimension. Towards a New Economics, New York 1988
WWW	Winning without War, New York 1964

NGR	The New Golden Rule. Community and Morality in a Democratic Society 1996

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Homepages

The Homepage of the Communitarian Network in Washington has the adress: http://www.gwu.edu/~ccps

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B.A. The Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1954

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Employment Experience:

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Assistant Professor, Columbia University 1959-1961

Associate Professor, Columbia University 1961-1967

Professor, Columbia University 1967-1980

University Professor, The George Washington University 1980-

Director, Center for Policy Research 1968-

Research Associate, Institute of War and Peace Studies, Columbia University (part-time) 1961-1971

Senior Staff Member, Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University 1961-1970

Associate Director, Bureau of Applied Social Research 1969-1970

Chairman, Department of Sociology, Columbia University 1969-1971

Guest Scholar, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. 1978-1979

Senior Adviser to Richard Harden, Special Assistant to the President, the White House 1979-1980

Thomas Henry Carroll Ford Foundation Professorship (Visiting Professor), Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University 1987-1989

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Etzioni served as the president of the American Sociological Association, 1994-95.

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