

Marriage and Civil Society

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An Institute for American Values Working Paper

Publication No.: WP45

Institute for American Values

Second Annual Family Policy Symposium

New York City

March 31, 1995

October 1995

Introduction

I'd like to thank all of you for coming today and being a part of this Second Annual Family Policy Symposium. This morning's presentation of *Marriage in America: A Report to the Nation*, the results of two years of deliberation by the Council on Families in America, engendered lively debate. I want to thank the panelists again -- David Popenoe, Jean Bethke Elshtain, William Galston, Sylvia Ann Hewlett, and Allan Carlson -- as well as all the rest of you for contributing to what I thought was a very good discussion and one which we are about to continue.

We are really lucky, and I mean this in lots of ways, that Jean Elshtain can really take this subject of marriage and talk with us further about it. I know in her usual way she will take us to a new level of thought. The subject is marriage and the civil society. Most of you, I think, know Jean, but for the few of you who don't, she is the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. This is a recent appointment for her; previously she was Centennial Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Jean is the author of many important books on a number of important subjects. Her recent book, *Democracy on Trial*, brings an increasingly important and influential voice to what is a growing debate in our nation about civil society.

It is a particular honor for me to say that Jean is also the current Chair of our Board of Directors at the Institute. She has been a staunch supporter of the Institute since its inception and somebody who has been a terrific friend and leader, someone for whom I have so much admiration and from whom I have learned so much. It therefore gives me special pleasure to introduce to you Jean Bethke Elshtain. Please join me in welcoming her.

David Blankenhorn
President

Marriage and Civil Society

by Jean Bethke Elshtain

Thanks, David. I have to say I have arrived at the point where I am getting a little tired of hearing myself talk, quite honestly, because I have been doing rather a lot of it. I became a grandmother a year ago and recently made a trip out to Colorado for my granddaughter's first birthday and my son-in-law informed me that when the baby is in her crib, talking non-stop to herself, they call her "Jean, Jr." I can always count on my family for an appropriate humbling moment.

But the topic today is a serious one, and I am afraid I am going to have to put on the table some rather unhappy evidence that we have about what's happening to American civil society and the way in which that ties in with the collapse and disintegration of our basic institutions, including marriage. The evidence comes from the streets, the neighborhoods, the schools, the churches, and our homes. The testimony of events is eloquent and often terrifying: violence, suffered and perpetrated; children unhappy, ignored, home alone, often neglected; teen mothers isolated, hovering in dark, dangerous places they are forced to call home; teachers afraid of their students; students afraid of other students; civic leaders gazing at a precipitous decline in involvement and participation in all community activities at all levels. This is America today.

I think it would be very difficult for anyone to seriously challenge this scenario, because the evidence that we now have available is so overwhelming. It's based on hundreds of studies by reputable scholars, from dozens of disciplines. None but the starry-eyed sentimentalists, committed to the status quo, none but these can cast their eyes over this spreading wasteland and say, "This is good, let's have more." Experts and ordinary citizens alike lament the growth of a culture of mistrust, cynicism, and scandal. We see corrosive forms of isolation, boredom, and despair. We see declining levels of involvement in politics from simple acts like the vote to more demanding participation in political parties and local civic associations. We see, in other words, the overall weakening of that world known as democratic civil society.

Now, we do know the following. We know that where norms and

networks of civic engagement are robust, education improves, families are more likely to stay together, poverty diminishes, crime is inhibited, and even, it seems, mortality rates improve. But in the words of Robert Putnam, from Harvard, who has penned what some now consider an instant classic in social science -- I'm drawing from his very important piece that's part of a larger project, called *Bowling Alone: America at the End of the 20th Century* -- Professor Putnam says that new evidence unfortunately suggests that civic engagement of all sorts has unexpectedly plummeted in the United States over the last generation. Participation has fallen off, often sharply, in all types of civic associations, from religious groups to labor unions, from women's clubs to fraternal orders, from neighborhood gatherings, to bowling leagues. More people are bowling than ever before, but they're bowling alone. Bowling leagues have decreased; their membership has decreased 40% in the last 10 to 15 years.

Social scientists call these forms of civic association "social capital" and it has significantly eroded. This is the decline of civil society. The most fundamental form of civic association is marriage, the family; and the massive loosening of family bonds fuels these other troubles, these other troubles in turn further disentangling the family. Ernie Cortes[SP?], Jr., the head of the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation Network, wrote the following: "Families teach the first lessons of relationships among persons, some of which are essential not only to private [?] life but to private [?] life as well. Within the family one learns to act upon others and to be acted upon. It is in the family that we learn to identify ourselves with others or fail to learn to love. It is in the family that we learn to give and take with others or fail to learn to be reciprocal. It is in the family that we learn to trust others as we depend on them or learn to distrust them. We learn to form expectations of others and hold them accountable. We learn to hold ourselves accountable. These lessons of reciprocity, trust, discipline and self-restraint are important to the forming of relationships in public life." He is alluding to the civic dimension of family life -- of marriage and family life -- something that is often forgotten in our notion of what counts as private and intimate. As if it can simply be exclusively that.

What is supposed to happen if we are unlucky enough in our families not to have learned these lessons is that there are institutions and relationships there to pick us up when we fall. But this we can no longer count on. That is, we can no longer assume an intact, robust civil society.

Let me share with you just a few bits of evidence drawn from Professor Putnam's groundbreaking work. Some of it may seem a bit idiosyncratic but it's all very interesting. The first thing he

points out is that young people growing up in neighborhoods where their neighbors attend church, even if they themselves do not come from a church-going family, are more likely to have a job and less likely to use drugs or to be involved in criminal activity. In other words, church-going influences by-standards and as churches flee neighborhoods, as that institution disintegrates, it has a negative impact overall on families and on the neighborhood. This feature of life adheres when you control for race, gender, parental education, and other factors. So there is an independent associational dimension to church-going that has an effect, even on those who are not themselves church members.

A second piece of evidence from Putnam's work is that since 1973 the number of Americans who reported that they had attended a public meeting on town or school affairs has fallen by more than one third.

Third, labor union membership, as you know, has been falling for decades, whereas at one time one of the most common civic associations and sources of solidaristic possibilities for working men and woman was in fact the labor union.

Fourth, participation in parent-teacher organizations has dropped catastrophically by more than one half between 1960 and 1975. Social scientists will usually try to pull their punches and sort of sit back and not get too excited; so when a professor at Harvard starts to talk like this, uses such extreme language, it really tells us something.

Fifth, the ranks of volunteers from mainline civic organizations has plummeted across the board. Just one statistic: the number of volunteers who make themselves available for the Red Cross has dropped 61% since 1970. Putnam calculates that there are 8 million fewer volunteers than there were in 1970. Again, fewer people are involved in the work of civic life and civic associations.

Now, some might suggest that we can find substitutes, that in fact we now have mass membership associations. Putnam suggests, and I agree, that these aren't really a substitute for the kinds of associations that have declined. In part because one usually isn't required to attend a meeting of any kind; you send in your check for your membership. The ties tend to be in the form of symbols and perhaps ideals but not to one another; one need not even know of the existence of others. Social connectedness here is part of the issue, the forging again of these bonds of social trust and reciprocity and responsibility and so on.

What about the support groups? We know that they're proliferating. Robert Wuthnow, in his work on the support-group

burgeoning, says that they do not play the same role as traditional associations of civil society. Wuthnow says: "These small groups provide occasions for individuals to focus on themselves in the presence of others. The social contact binding members together assumes only the weakest of obligations. Come if you have the time. Leave quietly if you get dissatisfied. And don't ever criticize anyone."

So we have massive evidence of significant decline in civil society in the formation of social capital. One might say that American civil society is unravelling. It's a small wonder then that we have become less trusting of one another. Now only 37% of people agree with the statement that most people can be trusted most of the time. Down from 58% in 1960. So the effects of this rising mistrust, privatization, and anomie are many. I have already noted that there is powerful support for the popularly held view that where neighborhoods and families are intact, drug, alcohol abuse, crime and truancy among the young diminish. Because families and neighborhoods are less likely to be intact, all forms of socially destructive behavior are on the rise. And Americans at the end of the 20th century, then, suffer from the effects of the dramatic decline in the formation of social bonds, networks, and trust, coupled with a diminution in investment in children. Members of the Council on Families in America have done a lot of good work showing this particular trend and showing that children have borne the brunt of these negative social trends. If family breakdown generates unparented children who then attend schools, those schools increasingly resemble tension centers rather than sites for training and discipline in education. This, in turn, contributes to out-of-wedlock births and violence at unprecedented levels.

Democratic theorists and democratic citizens, historically, have either taken for granted a backdrop of vibrant informal and formal civic associations -- assuming it will be there if we're to have a democratic polity -- or they have articulated explicitly the relationship between democracy and the everyday actions and spirit of a people. The latter was most famously presented by Tocqueville, of course, in his classic *Democracy in America*. One of the points that Tocqueville makes is that democracy requires laws and constitutions and authoritative institutions, but it also depends on certain dispositions. It depends on having a certain kind of person.

What are some of these dispositions? They include a preparedness to work with others for shared ends, a combination of often strong convictions coupled with the readiness to compromise and work with others and the recognition that one can't always get everything one wants. Another disposition is a sense of individuality and a commitment to civic goods that are not the

possession of one person or of one small group alone. The world that nourished and sustained such democratic dispositions was this thickly interwoven social fabric, this web of mediating institutions called civil society.

Now in his great book, Tocqueville warned of the possible coming of a world that was very different from the democracy and the rich associational life he observed. He urged Americans to take to heart a possible corruption of their way of life and in his worst case scenario, narrowly self-interested individualists deviated from the saving constraints and nature of overlapping associations of social life. These kinds of persons, he warned, would require more and more external controls, controls from above, in order to muffle at least somewhat the disintegrative effects of what he called "bad ego ###." He said that to avoid that happening, you've got to secure and to nourish these civic spaces between citizens and the state. He noted that we are involved in many overlapping forms of association; only such small-scale civic bodies would enable citizens to cultivate the democratic virtues and to play an active role in the democratic community over time. But the tale I am here telling is that although I don't think we have arrived at the culminating point of Tocqueville's worst case scenario yet, we are on that path unless we can find some way to turn things around.

The story I'm telling traces the unravelling of the institutions of civil society, hence the dramatic upsurge in all forms of social mistrust, generalized fearfulness, and cynicism. We've heard time and again that recent studies show that Americans, without regard for race, cite the same social problems when they are asked, "What are the troubles we face?" Poor education, crime, the imperiled intactness of home and family. The studies also show that African-Americans are more interested than any other group that their society faces a crisis in values, beginning with the family.

The distinguished sociologist Robert Bellah reports that Americans today say they brighten to hail this community, that if you can talk about community, that sounds pretty good. Especially if that talk of community doesn't appear to demand very much from them. But when the discussion turns to institutions and the need to sustain and support authoritative civic institutions, then he suggests that attention starts to wither and a certain sourness steps in. Now this bodes ill for liberal democratic society because that's a political regime that requires robust yet resilient institutions that embody and reflect, yet mediate and shape, the urgency of democratic passions and interest. And as our mediating institutions -- from the PTA to political parties -- disappear or are stripped of legitimacy and begin to collapse, a political wilderness will continue to spread. We will then see

more of what we already see: people sort of roaming the prairie, fixing on objects or policies or persons to excoriate or to celebrate, at least for a time, until some other enthusiasm or scandal sweeps over them. Now, if we have lost the sturdiness and the patience necessary to sustain civil society over the long haul, liberal democracy itself, as a system, as a social world, and as a culture, is in very big trouble.

So we must re-weave the bonds of community by rebuilding institutions. We cannot have one without the other. This is going to take decades. The question then becomes: do we have the political will, the energy, and the fortitude for this task? Do we care enough about the world? Do we love it enough to put our shoulders to the wheel this way? Americans are very impatient people, they want things to happen quickly. We want to be successful at everything. We want to be successful parents and partners and friends and lovers and we want to be successful at success. We always are drawn to that green light beckoning at the end of Daisy's dock. But where does it end? It may well end in the catastrophe that faced poor Jay Gatsby, given his seduction with that green light. The idea that something is always going to be better and easier and nicer and more perfect someplace else, so we don't have to tend to the place that we're in.

Well, let's return to marriage and the children. For we know that the massive loosening of marriage and family bonds and commitments is implicated in the unravelling of democratic civil society. There is a reciprocal effect here. We know that mothers and fathers are essential to the life of the child, the community, and the wider civil society. And we know that strong and perduring marriages -- strong family stories, if you will -- preserve and protect one of our own most cherished ideals: pluralism, plurality, our distinctiveness. Margaret O'Brien Steinfelds, the editor of a journal called *Commonweal* writes: "The values embodied in any family may come from religion, race, ethnicity, class, special intellectual, artistic, or manual skills, characterological or temperamental qualities, geographic setting and occupational preferences. The unique combination of these and other factors in a family draws on and constitutes the family's history, culture, and present social organization. A given generation may embrace those values and the rules that flow from them, adapt them to larger social and economic conditions or come to deplore them and rebel against them. But accepted or rejected, these values are central to the story of the family and to the identity of its members. And they form the boundaries within which children will develop, mature, and themselves come to reshape the values and rules their parents pass on to them. Family autonomy," she concludes, "is integral to that vast process."

So although the family is the locus of private life, it is also critical to public life, to the life of community and civic associations. And here the testimony of parents and experts converges. As we've learned in the Council, when parents are asked to tell their version of our current discontent, they lament the fact that it is harder to do a decent job raising children in a culture that is unfriendly to families and family attachments. Some of you raised questions about that this morning, about the ill-dignity suffered by parents. They're so rarely honored and rewarded for what they are doing. It seems to me a culture that is cynical about this is in great trouble. I have a proto-typical family, the Flint Family in Fremont, Nebraska, that I always want to pat on the back; I want to say to Betty and Bob, "Well done. Keep at it. We're with you. We're supporting you in your efforts."

The overwhelming majority of Americans, about 85% - 88%, believe that being a parent is much more difficult than it used to be. And this pessimism about the decline of respect for families and family values is increasing. Especially, interestingly enough, among women and among our fellow Hispanic and African-American citizens. Now, the family I'm talking about, obviously, is not a nice little, isolated, pastoral unit, but it is very much a social institution that is nested in a wider surround that either helps to sustain parental commitment and accomplishments or put negative pressure on mothers and fathers. That pressure takes many forms; I've mentioned just a few. But I think one point that we on the Council want to leave with all of you is our recognition that being a parent isn't just another life style choice. It is in fact a series of tasks conceived of as an ethical vocation. And we as a society, we further insist, should lighten the burden and smooth the path for parents in order that the complex joys of family life might rise to the surface and in order that the undeniable burdens of family responsibility might be more openheartedly borne.

Children lost to society in increasing numbers -- to civil society, to democratic society -- may be a growing phenomenon but it is one that we must name for what it is. It is a loss and it is a crying shame. So protecting, preserving, and strengthening mothers and fathers and their well-being is a way of affirming our commitment to the individual and to that democratic society that best speaks to the aspirations of individuals. What we have to do, it seems to me, is recognize that the rights of persons are fundamentally social. You cannot have a right all by yourself. Others have to honor and respect your right. This is a social story. What is at stake in the family debate and our response to it is nothing less than our capacity for human sociology.

Now, given the sad story that I've been telling, I would hope

that over the next decade in American Society we can set aside certain kinds of sterile disputes and get down to confronting this wider crisis. Make no mistake about it, the problem of values lies at the heart of this matter. There are other issues that are central but we want to lift up this issue: the issue of values, the issue of where the best part of ourselves resides as a culture. The question is whether we can in a way recuperate and restore that sense of social commitment and responsibility. Not in a kind of sour way where we are telling everyone to shape up, but in a way that builds in the acknowledgement that we can best be ourselves as individuals in a world that nurtures and sustains our projects, a world in which we, in turn, are called upon to nurture and sustain the projects of others.

Our current individualistic social contract mandates detachment. We all pay a very big price for this. This is something that we must recognize and to which we must give explicit articulation. There's an old Celtic saying, "We all warm ourselves on fires we did not build. We all drink from wells we did not dig." That's the recognition that marital and familial nurturance helps to provide for children. It cannot do this alone; that is what we have come to realize. Without these forms of recognition, my worry is that we will enter the nightmarish world of Thomas Hobbes' Social Contract: *Leviathan* is a state of nature where life is mean, nasty, brutish, and short. We will enter a world of pathos captured in the words of one young boy who was shuttled about from one foster care situation to another: he said to a friendly counselor who was trying to comfort him, "I am nobody's nothing." I think in this society today, more American children every day, realize or decide that they are "nobody's nothing." That's where we are to our shame and to our peril. And I'm afraid that's the sad note on which I will end. Thank you very much.

Questions and Answers

Q: I have a question about the issue of how we can change this; examples were given this morning with parallels to environmentalism, smoking, and so on. From your perspective as a political historian, has there ever been a society in the history of the world that has allowed its social fabric to unravel to the extent that ours has which has then come back?

A: It is very hard to make available to oneself and assure in a certain way the kind of data one would need in order to make a definitive statement about that, but we do have some sense of what happens when societies start to unravel. We have the stories of previous societies and eras about what happens when things start to go wrong. These stories sound a lot like what is happening with us. Now, you obviously don't want me to just say that. You want to know if, in fact, there is some way to turn this around. Or if, in fact, we are doomed. And why should this surprise us? All societies are subject to the judgement of time, if you will. Very few last forever. But I would say, I don't want America to fall, and I think that we all have a stake in what this society has historically meant to the world's peoples. Not just to those who were born here, but to those who came here. The fact that it has offered, as Lincoln said, "the last best hope on earth" as far as forms of political organization is a heavy responsibility. But it seems to me that we are obliged in some way to try to live up to that.

I've been struck on my trips to Central and Eastern Europe -- I get to Prague every year -- by how important the American Experiment is to the people who are trying to create these new democracies. It's absolutely vital to them; that's a very humbling experience. They are tremendously worried about what is happening with us. They are tremendously worried that American society may falter. So it's not just our own internal, domestic concern; it also involves our relation with other nations.

If we are going to turn this around and if the unraveling is going to stop, it seems to me a couple of kinds of approaches are required. We heard them articulated this morning from members of our Council.

One is the social movement idea that Bill Galston brought up. The fact that often societies change in

very dramatic ways from the ground up. The American civil rights movement has got to be one premier example in our own lifetime of that. Fundamental transformation in an entrenched world of racial segregation was a major change. The democratization movements in much of the world are examples of profound transformation that in many ways were unexpected. I think that we still have the resources as citizens of this society to make these changes and to turn much of this around. I am hopeful about that. I think it will require movement from the ground up, but it is also going to require some real creative political leadership to respond to these movements from the ground up. We need more than ever for good men and women to get into politics and to show some example of civic courage and fortitude. One of my worries about the cynicism is that some of the best people get drained away from political life. So if it is going to happen, it will happen that way. And if that doesn't work, if this hopeful scenario I've sketched does not come into play in the next couple of decades, then I for one think we are in very, very deep trouble.

Q: I am very interested in this idea of social movements. It's hard to think of a successful social movement which has not had a demonized enemy. The environmental movement had the polluter; the civil rights movement had the racist; the movement against drunk driving had the drunk. The question that I have in my mind is: Can a social movement work if there is not a clearly identifiable enemy? And if that's the case, is there an enemy here, and if so, can we talk about it in a real way?

A: It strikes me that if we are going to identify the enemy, we are going to become very, very uncomfortable because the enemy is ourselves through the way in which we have permitted this erosion of our own institutions. We are all implicated in it. I also think, by the way, that although there is an enemy or an opponent, still if you look at the difference in the rhetoric and the mode of political action in these various movements, you can see that certainly in the civil rights movement, as articulated by King, the idea was that there's a system that we're in opposition to but we believe that people's hearts and minds in fact can change. And that we can appeal to them through militant non-violent action, through redemption. So I think you can have forms of social movements where there may be opponents but there is some room for those

opponents to change. And that's different from having an implacable enemy that can never change, in which case you just mow them down.

Moderator:

I want to take two or three comments together.

Q: I want to pick up on your comments on the demise of civic associations, such as the PTA. I used to work for a national civic organization, in the programs department, for six or seven years. We had 8,000 chapters around the country -- local chapters and state groups. While I was there, we detected a substantial change: our chapters would come back and say, "we don't do that any more because now there's a non-profit organization that does that" or "Now there's a new government agency that takes care of that." This was a dramatic change in the organization. Today, this same national civic group is really on its last legs -- a national, traditional civic association formed in 1915. So I'm wondering if massive government displacement or shifting has taken place here. Where a lot of the civic activities that you would like to see us do on a voluntary basis at the local level are now being done by specialized groups or at the federal level.

Q: I would like to raise the question about time needs. The PTA example especially brings to mind two instances from my own life when, living in Wellesley in the 1970's, I went to Cub Scout meetings. The mothers sat in the room and I thought I was the only one who was working. We went around the room to find who was going to take care of the next meeting and each person said, "Well, I can't. I work." This was the pattern.

Another example is one where our children would come home and at dinner time we would talk about what happened during the day. They would tell us about some kid who got into trouble, and we would say, "Who was that? What was their name?" And they didn't want to tell us the name; they would say, "Why do you care, you don't know their parents anyway."

The final example is more contemporary. It's from the minister, the rector, of the church I go to, a very involved place. He says, "I just see people under such time pressures."

So I want to ask you, how does one deal with that? As a social movement? As who the enemy is? Because what I feel is that we here, and many of our peers, colleagues,

neighbors, are very hard working people. They are devoted to their work and to their community and to their families and to their children, and still we see these trends happening. So how do we feel about that?

Moderator:

Displacement of civil society by government institutions. Erosion of civil society through loss of time. Let's get one more on the table.

Q: I recently had the distinctly dubious pleasure of getting on the information super highway and learning to attach my modem to my computer and going on-line. I am discovering that this anonymous machine seems to be replacing community organizations. Do you have any thoughts about the role and impact of technology on the future of the family?

A: Let me start with the technology question first and work my way back. I was on a news talk program here in New York last night, talking about my book *Democracy on Trial*. The two people who called in were very angry with me. They said that I just hadn't recognized the absolute coming of the perfection of democracy through technology and through being able to be on line and to make instant decisions in a kind of plebiscitary fashion about what public policy ought to be. I managed, somehow, not to fall off this narrow chair they had me on when I was hearing some of these things.

I tried to explain why, in fact, that isn't what democracy is about. It isn't about the instant registering of a passing moment. It's about a certain kind of engagement. A cultural democratic argument and possibility in which we all have a stake. Certainly not the notion that this kind of anonymous way of doing things can not only actively substitute for being a citizen, being a neighbor, and so on but that it is a better version of democracy because you never have to deal with people. In this technological system you never have to deal with a real human being. It's another sort of Utopian promise that's going to come to an end, but in the meantime it's burgeoning. Technology as a solution is an idea that is out there but it's not going work.

The question about time is a very, very important one. I've even thought we should start talking about a politics of time. And we should start to organize a politics around time. Of course, it takes time to work just the politics, so you have this tension in even finding the time to organize around time.

But, it does seem to be a major issue. Americans work harder -- as far as we know -- than any other people anywhere. They spend more time at work and the official number of hours they are required to work a week haven't changed in about half a century, or something like that. But, as we know, Americans are running sort of faster and harder just to stay in place. We are beginning to realize the ways in which jobs and careers exhaust people. It's not just the total hours but also the nature of the work, the stress, the commuting time, and all the rest that is depleting.

If you asked a maligned mastermind to design a society that was unfriendly to children, it might look a lot like ours: the nature of work life, the patterns of living, the huge commutes people often have to make, the unsafe environments, and so on. So, the issue of time is one that's got to be addressed and it's got to be addressed creatively. It's going to require some changes on all sorts of levels. For decades in American society, we relied on the fact that women were not fully absorbed in the work force in order to do the job of community. And that's what we've begun to lose, or have lost in many ways. We've got to find some way to ease the pressure on mothers and fathers so they can both be involved in the work of community. Easier said than done, I know. But articulating the problem is the first start, and I don't think we've done that creatively enough.

Finally, the issue about the notion that NGO's or some other sort of agency will deal with or have displaced civil society. I think it's a combination of both. Some active displacement has gone on, that's for sure, and over time, certain cults of the expert arose. The notion arose that somehow we can't count on these amateurs called citizens: mothers and fathers, neighbors -- they really don't know what's best. So we've got to have some experts who can name the problem and then manage it. And we had a whole sort of movement in this society away from politics towards management: city planners, managers, and so on. What's happened to our cities, in part as a result of these forms of management, is not a happy story.

I think it's very important to restore our faith in the capacity of ordinary citizens to think about the issues that most affect them. Then we must find a civic space for them to articulate that. Finally, we must instill in them the respect and confidence that once they've articulated it, they

can, in fact, do something that will be worthy and will be respectful of the neighborhood that they live in and the city that they grew up in and all the rest. We've lost that democratic faith and that has to be restored because we know certainly that external institutions cannot replace these civic bodies but they can displace and undermine them. We've told that story. We see that now. That has to be rethought and turned around.

We also have to know that we can't just rely on market mechanisms to pick up the pieces either. So we can't rely on the logic of the state or the logic of the market; it's got to be the logic of what I've been calling civil society.

Moderator:

Thank you, Jean. Today more than any time, after hearing Jean talk about this, it creates two feelings that would seem to be in conflict with one another. One sense I get is an appreciation of the rigor, extent, and damage of the situation, almost a sense of hopelessness in the face of the facts. At the same time, I leave feeling a sense of, if not actually inspiration, then perhaps motivation. I feel that we all need to be up and doing something. So it's not just the recognition that leads to passivity, but I think maybe the recognition that leads to the sense of aspiration and thank you for that, Jean.

In bringing this discussion to a close, I want once again to thank this morning's panelists and Jean for her insightful speech this afternoon. This has been a terrific discussion and we'll do it again next year. I think the kicking off of the Council's marriage report has been an important event. It also gives a context to the work that we are going to do in the next year: reaching out more to younger people and then placing the work that we do in the framework of the debate. I'm confident that this emerging and increasingly important debate on civil society is an on-going conversation. This conversation will hopefully lead to ameliorative actions. Thank you for coming.