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Maine's Civil Society

Mark Lapping

The Talmud records this story: A Gentile once appeared before a great rabbi and said, "I want to be converted to Judaism, but only on the condition that you teach me all of the Torah while I stand on one foot." The rabbi sent him away. The Gentile then went to another learned rabbi, Hillel. He agreed to the man's request on the spot and said to him, "That which is hateful unto thee, do not do unto another. That is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary. Go and study."¹ Were it that straight-forward and were it possible for us to live by the "Golden Rule" –surely the essence of a truly civil and decent society. But alas, this appears not to be the case and tonight's talk on Maine's "civil society" is the story of how we do and can live, albeit in a place where our failin²gs often overwhelm our virtues both as individuals and as a community.

In an effort to define what we mean by 'civil society' in Maine let me initially turn to the work of Mil Duncan, on-leave from the University of New Hampshire and currently heading-up the Ford Foundation's rural poverty programs. In her most recent book, World's Apart: Why Poverty Persists in Rural America, Duncan compares and contrasts forms of poverty across the nation through in-depth interviews, profiles and community case studies. In a comparison of a Mississippi Delta town and an Appalachian community with the situation in a declining mill town here in Maine -- that she calls Gray Mountain-- she argues that "the main difference is that when people who are poor in Gray Mountain want to do better, they can find ladders. There are more resources to go around, both because there are fewer poor and because there are more Joanne Martins, Coach Wilsons, and Cassidy Morses [local people who often lend the necessary

“helping hand” in times of difficulty]. The problems are less severe, the resources to deal with them greater, and the whole community works differently – partly as a result of the ratio of needs to resources and partly because long-standing habits of participation, inclusion, and investment have been nourished over the years.”³ This is as good a description of community civil society as any –high levels of voluntary participation, inclusion of the entire community, and mutual investment and support for one another. How did the Martins, the Wilsons, the Cassidys and these “long-standing habits” come about over the years? The answer for Duncan and an ever-growing number of analysts is to be found in a rich civil society suffused with social capital, numerous networks for the sharing of information and effort, and an authentic commitment to both place and community. Parenthetically, one might well ask whether or not what Duncan found continues to exist in mill towns when the middle management of a large multinational corporation -- which seems to ‘come and go’ and appears to develop fewer ties to the local community-- has replaced previous local ownership.

The political philosopher Michael Walzer says that civil society is uncoerced human association along with a set of relational networks –formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology– that fills the space that is civil society.⁴ Put another way, civil society is that arena or location between the State and the Marketplace that is inhabited by all who engage in voluntary associational life that advances the common good or the public agenda. Civil society seeks to bring about a balance between the public and the private and the rights which a free people enjoy together with the responsibilities they must execute to maintain these rights.⁵

A focus on ‘uncoerced human association’ has become central to almost all contemporary discussions on the nature of civil society. In last week’s talk my colleague Dahlia Bradshaw Lynn spoke at length about the voluntary sector and how its emergence has changed American life, overwhelmingly for the better. Our traditions of voluntary association run deep in this country and especially in New England. Its existence was one of those societal characteristics

which Alexis de Tocqueville, perhaps the keenest student of American mores, came to see as foundational to our democratic life. In his Democracy in America, published in two volumes the 1830s and '40s, Tocqueville observed that when the English have a problem they invariably turn to the Crown. And that when the French have a problem they turn to the State. But when Americans have a problem they turn to one another. This “turn toward one another,” was an essential ingredient of civil society for him. It was the essence of town life and government in New England, which Tocqueville touted as the very epitome of democratic culture. I will return to this theme a bit later but it is useful at this point to note that the uncoerced cooperation of American associational life is very much the focal point of the civil society debate.

The contemporary discourse on voluntary associations, which has become something akin to a cottage industry, is largely the result of the work of Robert Putnam of the J F K. School at Harvard. Long a student of Italian political culture, Putnam co-authored a very important book published several years ago on Italian politics, Making Democracy Work⁶ Here he attempted to explain why and how some democratic cultures fail while others continue to flourish even in periods of crisis. Putnam and his colleagues came to the conclusion that democracy is not merely a political system but is also a socio-economic and cultural system. It implies and demands a sense of community based upon reciprocity, trust, consistent face-to-face interaction through dense patterns of networks, which themselves are created by a rich and diverse associational life. Putnam followed-up his work on Italy with a consideration of our present national situation. This work resulted in the publication of his now famous 2001 book, Bowling Alone,⁷ which decried the deteriorating condition of American civic life, our disassociation from one another because of the lack of membership and participation in organizations, an on-going drop in the number of those who vote or actively participate in politics, and a splintering of community life in general. The reasons for this situation were found in such things as increasing rates of television viewing

—even though we constantly complain that there is nothing worthwhile to watch— an economy which almost compels two-career families with little time left for family and community life, changes in core values, and suburban sprawl, amongst other forces. In essence, we still bowl but we now tend to bowl alone rather than in leagues, as we formerly did. And by bowling alone we lose the contact with one another, the identification with common pursuits, the sharing of information and knowledge, and the bonding which creates trust and the possibility for reciprocity. Together Putnam sees these manifestations of the decline in community in America as the loss of “social capital.” Initially defined by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, social capital applies to a type of social structure based upon norms of trust, reciprocity and a concern for the common good. This understanding of how human interaction creates a larger and more robust sense of community entered the American dialogue initially through the work of James Coleman.⁸ Bourdieu and Coleman both recognized that social capital, compared to other forms of capital, was both intangible and deeply communal and that it existed essentially in the heads and hearts of people and required interaction among and between people for its creation and sustenance. In a sense social capital is a form of internalized community norms which, as Alejandro Portes points out, “allows the holders of [social capital]. . . to extend loans without fear of non-payment, benefit from private charity, or send their kids to play in the street without concern.”⁹

Putnam synthesized all of this and through his own empirical studies came to define social capital also as trust, reciprocity and a sense of the common good or “civic virtue.” He saw it threatened because we no longer engage in associational life to the extent that we once did and thereby we have lost much of the face-to-face interaction and knowledge of one another that is vital to the creation and growth of social capital. His emphasis on associational life as a building bloc for civil society has been the overriding point in Putnam’s argument that most of his critics have questioned. A number have argued that not all voluntary associations pursue civil or

beneficial policies. Nicholas Leeman, for one, wrote a provocative essay entitled “Kicking in Groups” to underscore that it was not the means but the ends of associations that determine their utility and impact on the deepening of civil society.¹⁰ To reinforce this line of argument let us remember that while many Maine people joined the KKK –in the 1920s it boasted a membership of approximately 50,000, had a substantial headquarters in Portland, and had a real impact on the state’s political landscape– few would argue that it championed either civility or civic virtues. Membership in the Klan reflected a voluntary membership based on a distorted conceptualization of heritage as well as a collectively perceived set of fears. It also grew out of a fragmented political environment defined by special interests rather than common ones, the antithesis of a robust civil society..

Perhaps the quintessential Maine voluntary association was the Grange or the Patrons of Husbandry. A national organization, the Maine Grange first appeared in 1873 when the Hampden subordinate grange was established. When farming was a more common way of life in Maine, the Grange was the ubiquitous and influential voluntary organization. As it promoted the modernization of agriculture through lectures, demonstrates and publications, it also sought to make farm life more tolerable and attractive through the sponsorship of cultural and social events, such as lectures, visiting entertainment, dances, common meals, picnics and rituals. The location of these functions, as with almost all Grange activities, was the local grange hall which served as something of a community center. It brought people together, nurtured a high degree of fellowship and sisterhood, and sponsored activities that involved the entire family. The Grange was also involved in the political life of the Maine and often wielded considerable clout. The decline of the Grange mirrors both the decline of agriculture in much of Maine as well as a shift in the nature of associational life.

A remarkable example of uncoerced association life in Maine was the life of one Warren Durgin, a farmer and woodsman. Introduced to us in Theda Skocpol’s 2002 essay in the Maine

Policy Review, his life is further rounded out in her most recent book, Diminished Democracy.¹¹

Skocpol's husband first came upon Durgin's gravestone while traipsing through the mountains of the western part of the state. We learn from the marker that Durgin was one of the pallbearers for Abraham Lincoln. But we also see that he was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the Kezar Lake Grange No. 440 and the Order of Odd Fellows. Skocpol remarks in her essay that "I could readily understand why Durgin would want to proclaim for all eternity his service as Abraham Lincoln's pallbearer. But given such momentous wartime service, why add the ties to the Grand Army of the Republic, the Grange, and the Odd Fellows?"¹² It could not be otherwise. Durgin was of his place and of his time, a period when Maine people, and other Americans, freely joined and actively participated in civic organizations which often spanned class divisions, ethnicity, occupational status, and age differences. As she writes, "Warren Durgin clearly lived in a full-fledged version of Tocqueville's civic America." He was, like thousands upon thousands of Mainers, obligated to do these things, to attend meetings, to pay his dues, and to participate actively in the life of the associations that he joined because he simply had to do so if he was to enjoy the rewards which came with fellowship and citizenship.

Critics of Putnam argue that if Warren Durgin were alive today he would likely be a member of as many associations and organizations –and perhaps even more– than he was during his lifetime.¹³ But the point is, as Putnam, Skocpol and others have countered, that most of these contemporary organizations will be vocational in nature, professionally dominated advocacy groups operating on the national level, non-profit institutions which are minimally membership organizations in our meaning of the term, often wedded to the "grants economy," and fundamentally managerial as opposed to participatory in nature. Therein lies the critical distinction: Warren Durgin's affiliations were essentially fraternal and civic while today our associations tend to reflect our occupational status, political commitments in the broadest sense of the word, and require our dues rather than our sweat. Even advocacy groups like Common

Cause, which is headed-up by Mainer Chellie Pingree, are staff-driven, concentrate on lobbying and research, and are managed from the top. They are part of what Skocpol calls the emerging “top-down civic culture.” Others celebrate this development, like Debra Minkoff, who maintains that such national-level associations “transcend parochial boundaries based on communities of residence.”¹⁴ Please do not get me wrong: I am a member of many of these groups and think that some, though not all, do a creditable job. But the problem with this conception of civil society is that it is about “doing for instead of doing with” –as Skocpol’s puts it– thus contributing to an on-going process of infantilizing the American people and makes us ever more dependent upon more distant and nameless “others” rather than on themselves and their neighbors. Some of this is, of course, inevitable and even desirable. But let us recognize that this tendency makes civil society less muscular and we become civic couch potatoes, life as television rather than the endless meetings, hours upon hours of talk, and the ‘making it up as you go along’ which is the stuff of democratic civic life.¹⁵

Among the reasons why social capital has been in decline, according to Putnam, is suburban sprawl. Another one of my colleagues who spoke in this series, Charlie Colgan, makes the point that in Maine we increasingly live suburban and work urban. Not only do we spend more time on the road and in our cars than ever before, but the separation between home and work is also growing, thus fragmenting daily experience ever further. Sprawl’s impact on civil society can be seen in some profound ways. As an example, an increasing number of Maine towns are at-risk of losing their volunteer fire departments only to see them replaced by professional departments. On balance this might seem like an advance. In reality, it is something of a retreat from one of the purest forms of Maine’s civil society, in my judgement. There was a time in Maine when local townspeople took turns clearing the snow from roads, building bridges and other forms of infrastructure, providing for the truly needy, and raising money for common civic pursuits through bean suppers and the like. These important local activities were “part and parcel” of the

rhythm of the civic experience. While I do not wish to overly romanticize these sorts of activities, the larger point is that we continue to distance ourselves from the things which must get done if we are to function both individually and collectively. In the case of the loss of volunteer fire departments, this is indicative of the fact that as we continue to sprawl fewer of us will work and live in the same space and polity. The inevitable result will be that many of our obligations to one another are becoming ever more tenuous and passed on to third party agencies..Very much more can be said about sprawl, the “smart growth” initiatives which seeks to reign it in, the “Great American Neighborhoods” movement and similar matters, but this is not the place for that discussion. Suffice it to say that whether it is the good work of the “Land for Maine’s Future” program,

SmartGrowth Maine, or the burgeoning land trust movement, Maine people have long realized that how we live upon the land is a reflection of how we choose to live with one another, either in an engaged community or in more privatized settings.

In yet another realm the decline in social capital and civil society may be seen in what I believe to be a true crisis, the survival of towns and their governance. This is quite different and very far away from the entirely necessary current debate on the regionalization of services that is now taking place. Over the past two decades, we have actually witnessed a growing number of Maine towns debate and some deorganize or dissolve themselves. Indeed, in the very heartland of Tocquevillian America, Maine, the very efficacy and viability of local governance and democracy, built on volunteer efforts and traditional notions of civil society, is being challenged.

Towns are “republics in miniature” to use a phrase coined by Ross Stephens and Nelson Wikstrom, the latter a former faculty member at UMaine.¹⁶ Currently Atkinson is debating whether or not to deorganize. In the recent past Alna, Benedicta, Cooper, Coplin Plantation, Madrid, Crystal, Grand Isle, Centerville, Greenfield Plantation, Hammond, Carol Plantation,

Elliotsville, Barnard, Sherman, Shirley, Milo, New Sweden and other communities have examined dissolving local government or they have done it. The process for deorganization is a carefully laid out one and requires considerable public discussion and official votes supervised by the State of Maine. Having read accounts of these meetings and attended others as part of a research project I am engaged in, I believe that most people approach the question with what can only be called resignation rather than enthusiasm. In the case of Greenfield Plantation former first selectman Linda Blakeman said that deorganization “was like a death. . . I sat in the car and cried.”¹⁷ In Crystal, selectman James DeAngelo felt that towns no longer mattered in the larger scheme of things when he stated that “What decisions do we make? We don’t make any decisions. Most are made at the state level now.”¹⁸ And in the most recent case of dissolution, that of Centerville, Maxine Caler, former school board committee chair and a former town assessor, commented that “I guess people have lost interest in doing things for the town. The younger generations have grown up and gone away. And most of the people just stay to themselves now. Everybody is busy working or doing their own thing.”¹⁹

What lies behind this phenomenon is a complex of issues, including rising property tax burdens, the tree tax compensation formula, an erosion of a critical mass of residents willing and capable to undertake the hard work of local government, rising costs of school and other services, and other factors. In some places, like Madrid, the final vote for deorganization split along ‘time of residency in town’ lines with relative newcomers voting to disband and long-term residents voting to keep the town government in tact. One can only imagine that what elements of civil society remain in Madrid have eroded further by a process which highlighted this schism. Of the state’s process and procedure of deorganization, Michael Starn, of the Maine Municipal Association, has made the point that for small towns to “do all the things that have to be done to run a town requires commitment to a lofty tradition of service that may be fraying as towns age and change. Money is tight, rules are convoluted, federal mandates governing everything from

landfills to disabilities can seem to come from Jupiter, at least in Maine. Everybody's busy, and apathy calls."²⁰

Whatever its causes the significance of town dissolution must be recognized as the gravely disturbing situation that it is. Some communities may well be too small to remain viable but the loss of self-government is a wound to the entire community of Maine and a diminution of everyday democracy and civil society. As the regionalization discussion matures it would serve us all well if in addition to looking at the efficiency criteria that we also ask questions about how we might enhance or restore vigor and meaning to local government with its human scale, high levels of interaction and connectedness. I believe that it must be done. The smartest man I know, who continues to farm well into his eighth decade, has said to me several times that he loves living in his tiny upcountry New England town because "it is so small that you know who all of the SOBS are." There is something to be said for the scale and the intimacy of the local.

The news on the social capital and civic society front here in Maine is far from all bad. Indeed, we remain one of the healthiest places in the country in terms of the quality and vitality of our civic culture. There are many organizations, formal and informal, and foundations and non-profits, as well as community development corporations, like Coastal Enterprises, making very positive contributions to the maintenance and renewal of community here in Maine. In cooperation with the Maine Community Foundation, one of these marvelous entities, Putnam's Harvard-based Saguaro Seminar in Civic Engagement undertook a survey of the strength of social capital in Lewiston-Auburn as part of a larger national study. While one ought not generalize about an entire state from one case study –carried out by my USM/LAC colleagues Betty Robinson and Marv Druker– the findings are nevertheless revealing and important. Surveys and studies were done on the dimensions and depths of social capital using such parameters as trust, political participation, civic leadership and associational involvement, informal socializing and bonding, rates and types of voluntarism and private giving, engagement

in faith-based communities and organizations, and other benchmarks or metrics of social capital. The results strongly suggest a community with a considerable reservoir of social capital, high levels of trust between and among various groups and municipal government, including immigrants, fewer barriers to social connectedness based on class when compared with other parts of the nation, strong and visible roles played by women in the fabric of the community and its institutions, and high levels of civic engagement among residents, at levels which far exceed national rates for involvement. Levels of active participation in faith-based organizations and activities, however, was lower in Lewiston-Auburn than the national average, as was actual voluntarism among the middle-aged and older residents of the community.

Taken together the information and stories which resulted from the Saguaro Seminar should give us pause, at least on the national level, and some degree of cautious pride here in Maine. Ultimately, Putnam came to the conclusion that we simply are “better together,” which became the title of his latest book as well as his ongoing project to help renew American civic society.²¹

In studying civil society stories keep on emerging, small parts of which I have included in this talk. One could mention many more, including how Maine people reacted to 9/11, how people often come together to help those left homeless after a house fire or to support those facing a catastrophic health crisis and, of course, the ice storm which held the state in its grip for days upon days. Stories are powerful because they form a narrative which helps us to understand our place in the world as well as assisting us to make sense of what we experience. Narratives are constructed and are purposeful, as in the way that Downeast humor has created a particularly wily, witty, and playful Mainer who enjoys nothing more than to have fun at the expense of a haughty, arrogant and not-to-bright –numb is the proper adjective, as Tim Sample reminds us—visitor from away.

Narratives can have immense power. Let me try to explain this point through a digression. I

have spent parts of the last decade or so working on civil society issues in Estonia, which regained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Prior to that it was annexed into the Soviet Union for better than 50 years. And during that time of deep repression, terrorism –one out of every ten Estonians died on the way to, in, or coming back from the Gulag– and cultural subjugation, the Soviets moved approximately 400,000 ethnic and linguistic Russians into the country. In a small nation of not quite a million people, this was a huge population transfer which changed the dynamics of nearly everything in Estonian life. Since regaining their independence both Russian residents in the country and native Estonians have been working toward a new conception of citizenship which would allow both communities to come together as a single nation of Estonians who are ethnically and linguistically diverse. There are some considerable obstacles in the way of this transformation, but none strikes me as more formidable than the fact that Russian Estonians continue to get much of their information from Russian sources in the Russian Federation. At the same time Estonian Estonians are tied to an Estonian language media. What has emerged is a nation where a third of the country has a narrative wildly different from that of the majority. History during the years of Soviet power is recorded and understood in profoundly different ways, the struggles people faced in one community are portrayed in a manner opposite to that of the other community, and contemporary problems are often defined and framed in such fundamentally divergent ways so as to make them even worse. Instead of one single, unifying narrative, at least two different ones exist making it extraordinarily difficult for bonding, trust, and reciprocity to develop and mature. An emerging civil society exists in Estonia, though its roots are not yet very deep and there remain suspicions and fears.

While I would hardly suggest that this is happening here in Maine, I have some fears that the on-going portrayal of “two Maines” instead of one has the potential to undercut the civic

enterprise. Our common narrative seems to be fraying a bit at its edges. The roots of the “two Maines” characterization lies in the portrayal of one part of the state as entirely prosperous, while the other part is atrophied and in decline. While this is a stereotypical view of things, it appears to have taken hold in our imaginations and politics. This narrative sees the first region composed of much of southern and mid-coast Maine while the remainder of the state is the second region. Yet even stereotypes have some element of truth to them and this is no exception. It might be helpful to provide some perspective here by realizing that many other states appear to have the same kind of regional imbalance. For almost as long as there has been a Michigan, for example, there has been a strong tension between the Upper Peninsula and the remainder of the state. In Illinois “upstate” versus “downstate” is a constant political refrain. The western panhandle region of Nebraska actually attempted to secede and join up with Wyoming. However many times one points this out it does not make the “Two Maines” argument any less powerful. We have seen members of our legislature attempt to address these perceived problems in any number of ways, some of which are quite ridiculous. I see the possible emergence of two divergent narratives of the present as potentially dangerous serving only as an obstacle in making real progress on the problems that confront us, such as the equalization of services, stemming the tide of out-migration of the young and well educated, affordable housing and health services, the creation of genuine “high road” employment opportunities, and the restoration and revival of hope. We also must concede that addressing the growing gap in opportunity between regions is not entirely susceptible of solution by Augusta alone. We still lack a robust and well articulated regional economic development policy at the federal level and the President’s budget proposal could lead to further cuts in many of those programs which have been most beneficial to regional development and small towns and rural areas. But this doesn’t entirely get us off the hook. We can choose to allow the two narratives to emerge and drive us farther apart as a community or we can demand that strategies be enunciated and investments be made that build one Maine

narrative. Narrative does not appear out of the proverbial ‘thin air.’ It is constructed from many sources. As a concept it is closely allied to the long-held American belief that an “informed citizenry” is crucial to the development of civil society.”One of the legacies of the early republic,” writes historian Richard D. Brown, “was an ideology of an informed citizenry that would become a central theme in American public life, encouraging a wide array of voluntary associations such as political parties as well as promoting the printing industry, the post office, and the development of public education from primary schools through technical colleges and universities.”²² A diversity of sources of information together with “fair comment” is absolutely essential to the development of a civil society. One emerging obstacle can be seen in is the growth of control of Maine’s media by corporations located outside of the state of Maine. This is especially true in the area of radio station ownership where, with very few exceptions, two out-of-state corporations own nearly all of the radio media in Maine. The great exception is, of course, Maine Public Radio. Newspapers appear to be growing in number, mostly of the weekly and “community” variety, and local community news coverage appears to be strong. In the area of television coverage we find a mix of in-state and out-of-state ownerships. Maine Public Television is an alternative. Maine is more fortunate than many other largely rural states where both ownership is highly concentrated by out-of-state corporations and coverage local news and issues has declined. While we presently maintain a reasonable balance in the area of media ownership and coverage, we are losing some of the “fair comment” so essential to an informed citizenry. I am not speaking here about a sudden dearth in the number of editorial pages or television “opinions ” pieces, like those of Fred Nutter here in the Portland area. We have plenty of that. The real loss is in the demise of The Maine Times and similar vehicles which provided in-depth and wide coverage of all things Maine. I am not arguing here for a revival of that newspaper, though it has been tried several times without success. And much as I wish it were still with us, that does not seem likely. In the demise of The Maine Times we

have lost a critical perspective, much fair comment, and not a little bit of our narrative as a somewhat contrarian and independent place with a civil society to match.

Throughout this talk I have focused on the infrastructure of civil society and particularly the role social capital plays as a key component. I think we all recognize that democratic citizens are not born; they are made, nurtured by a robust and diverse civil society, and educated in civic practices. We learn how to act in a civic sense in the contexts of the institutions of our early lives –families, schools, churches, and organizations, like the Girl Scouts. As young people watch what is happening around them, the attitudes and postures modeled by adults, and how they attempt to emulate behaviors in their early years, all have considerable bearing on just what type of a citizen we are likely to become. Within this mix are the schools, that civic institution which John Dewey called the “laboratory of democracy.” It should come as no surprise, but rather with some satisfaction, that Maine’s ”Learning Results” strategy has a good deal to say about civic culture. Civil society in this context is closely tied to the social studies curricula. While entirely justifiable I hope that my short talk this evening strongly suggests that building a civil society is not just about a particular subject matter but is, more importantly, about how act and what we do in the public realm, a disposition, if you will. Thus an emphasis on praxis as well as theory, form as well as content, schools as living civil communities aggressively pursuing critical thinking, and the acquisition of the skills of that make the category of report cards, “playing and working well with others,” vidi and entirely necessary. A Maine document which does this, and was also developed during Commissioner Albanese’s tenure as Maine’s Education Commissioner, is Taking Responsibility: Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior in Maine Schools and Community.²³ I highly commend it to you. It is as strong a statement on what our civic expectations ought to be as any that I have read.

I began this talk with a quote from Hillel. Let me conclude with his words: “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I?”²⁴ Thank you.

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¹Rabbi Alexander Feinsilver, ed. 1980. The Talmud for Today. NY: St. Martin's Press, 124.

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³Duncan, Worlds Apart, 184.

⁴Michael Walzer. 2002. "A Better Idea: The Idea of Civil Society," in Virginia Hosgkinson and Michael W. Foley, eds., The Civil Society Reader. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England and Tufts University, 306-321.

⁵Brian O'Connell. 1999. Civil Society: The Underpinnings of American Democracy. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England and Tufts University).

⁶Robert D. Putnam, Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti.. 1994. Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁷Robert D. Putnam. 2001. Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. NY: Simon and Schuster.

⁸James Coleman. 1998. Foundations of Social Theory. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University.

⁹Alejandro Portes. 1998. "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Society," in Eric J. Lesser, ed., Knowledge and Social Capital: Foundations and Applications. Woburn, Mass.: Butterworth-Heinemann, 43-67..

¹⁰Nicholas Leeman. 1966. "Kicking in Groups," The Atlantic Monthly, 227:4, 22-26.

¹¹Theda Skocpol. 2000. "Warren Durgin's Gravestone and the Renewal of American Civic Democracy," Maine Policy Review 11:2, 8-11; Theda Skocpol. 2003. Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

¹²Skocpol, Diminished Democracy, 5.

¹³Dietland Stolle and Thomas Rochon. 1998. "Are All Associations Alike? Member Diversity, Associational Type, and the Creation of Social Capital," American Behavioral Scientist, 42:1, 47-65; Carla M. Eastis. 1998. "Organizational Diversity and the Production of Social Capital: One of These Groups is Not Like the Other," American Behavioral Scientist, 42:1, 66-77.

¹⁴Debra C. Minkoff. 1997. "Producing Social Capital: National Movements and Civil Society," American Behavioral Scientist, 40, 606-7.

¹⁵Francesca Polletta. 2002. Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

¹⁶G. Ross Stephens and Nelson Wikstrom. 2003. "'Republics in Miniature' and Other Toy Governments." paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, August 29.

¹⁷Quoted in John Hale. 2003., "Property Tax Load Becoming Heavier, Cuts in Federal, State Aid Adding to Local Burden," Bangor Daily News, August 21.

¹⁸Quoted in Wayne Brown. 1995. "Crystal Votes to Continue Process to Deorganize Town," Bangor Daily News. January 19.

¹⁹Quoted in Katherine Cassidy. 2003. "Region's Tiniest Town Deorganizes: Centerville Residents Grew Tired of Responsibilities of Self-government," Bangor Daily News. Nov. 6.

²⁰Quoted in Amy Zimet. 1999. "No More Town, Madrid Lost Much. Now it Loses its Being," Portland Press Herald, November 21.

²¹Robert D. Putnam and Lewis M. Feldstein. 2003. Better Together: Restoring the American Community. New York: Simon and Schuster.

²²Richard D. Brown. 1996. The Strength of a People: The Idea of an Informed Citizenry in America, 1650-1879. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, xiii.

²³Executive Summary, Maine State Department of Education, February, 2001.

²⁴Quoted in Abba Eban. 1984. Hetiage: Civilization and the Jews. NY: Summit Books, 82.