CAN DEMOCRACY SURVIVE INTERDEPENDENCE?
Benjamin R. Barber

(A WORKING PAPER FOR THE CIVWORLD GLOBAL DEMOCRATIC

GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP, ADAPTED FROM A BOOK PROPOSAL)

Democracy today is challenged, radically, deeply, fatefully. Born and cultivated in the ancient world as the face-to-face participatory township, and successfully re-imagined in the early modern world as the representative nation-state, it must now adapt to a global, networked, interdependent world. Or likely perish. To survive actually, it must find ways to establish itself virtually. To preserve its local vitality, it must achieve a global compass.

Democracy has always been plural, a congeries of distinctive systems and varied approaches to self-government with a deep common commitment to some degree of equality and liberty, if often in the name of a citizenry comprising something less than the entire adult population. It had its roots in the Hellenic and Roman West, but also found resonance beyond. That women and men can participate in governing themselves is not just a Western conceit. Yet there is no precedent in any democratic system, neither in the participatory polis nor in the representative sovereign state, for planetary self-government, and just to recall how difficult and varied the journey from township to nation has been is to judge global governance an unlikely prospect. After all, democracy within nation-states is troubled enough. The few and paltry examples of regional or international governance we have, such as the United Nations system or the Bretton Woods complex of international financial institutions, or the experiment in pooled

sovereignty of the European Community -- now imperiled by a Euro crisis and a lack of solidarity -- offer as many reasons to doubt as to embrace the possibilities of democracy's survival.

In the beginning, in its first age, ancient democracy was forged for an intimate world of kinship. Not only in the West, but around the world in different times and places, tribesmen and neighbors who shared a locality and knew each another personally, found ways to govern themselves directly through ongoing participation and self-legislation. The polis, the town and the principality as well as the tribe and the kinship community, all territorially constrained, invited engagement and facilitated some degree of self-rule, often by direct means.

Scale has always been democracy's greatest challenge, however. Democracy in all of its forms has been everywhere challenged to respond to scale, and to what is perhaps its most formidable artifact: the paradox of participation. The paradox arises out of the fact that while participation is always necessarily local and centrifugal, power is by its nature central and centripetal. Society's naturally expanding scale is forever outdistancing democracy's naturally limited compass. That was the issue confronted by ancient direct democracy, above all in Athens and Rome; and it remains the issue confronting those who today aspire to fashion a new age of global democracy.

Both in non-Western tribal enclaves and in the self-governing poleis of the Hellenic Mediterranean, the ancients were tested in their impulse to self-government by the paradox of participation. As the size and compass of ancient society grew, and townships were succeeded by regional monarchies and then empires, those seeking to found or reestablish a self-governing polity in the face of medieval and early modern

authoritarianism were compelled to organize themselves around newly imagined "peoples" and barely coalesced new nations. The state was becoming too large to countenance direct democracy – or, as many theorists believed, to support democracy at all.

The skeptics turned out to be wrong, but only because of a seemingly irrepressible human inclination to liberty, and the inventiveness of democratic theorists who forged and adapted new varieties of social, urban and political engineering that paved the way from feudalism to a renaissance of proto-democratic innovation. Democracy turned out to be nothing if not resilient. Scale was a formidable but not an insurmountable impediment. In what we might call a second age of democracy, driven by resistance to the hubris of illegitimate power and by a stubborn and perennial striving for human liberty, democracy was renewed in a different form -- not just through struggle but by virtue of such innovative devices as federalism and representation, devices that addressed scale and promised self-government by indirect means. Necessarily less concerned with participation than the small-scale polities of the ancient world and the principalities and townships of the Renaissance had been, these new institutions latched onto new nation states and forged new constitutional surrogates for the direct participation they could no longer sustain. These included accountability, tacit consent and popular sovereignty, features the tyrannical systems they overthrew did not and could not possess.

A new constitutional approach rooted in the idea of a social contract -- government as an artful invention of will rather than a natural expression of human sociability -- replaced active with tacit consent, and made modern majoritarianism rather than ancient consensus the democratic touchstone. It permitted the few to govern, but on

behalf of and with the consent of the many in a manner that endowed government with popular legitimacy despite the absence of direct popular participation. The successful integration of the democratic idea via the social contract into the early modern nation-state forged what the historian R.R. Palmer called an "age of democratic revolutions" that began in 1688 in England, continued through the American and French revolutions in the late eighteenth century, and persists in our own time in the fervor of post-colonial and "national liberation" regimes trying to establish autonomous democratic governance, whether in the name of or in defiance of Western former colonial masters.

Today, even as relatively young democracies in India, Brazil, Nigeria, Venezuela, South Africa, Indonesia, and Korea, as well as newer emerging or troubled would-be democracies in Kuwait, Morocco, Bolivia, Iraq and Afghanistan seek to establish or deepen their independence and freedom, democracy stands on the threshold of a new age. But this new age is defined, paradoxically, by forces that again obstruct and undermine collective self-government -- above all by run-away scale once more demanding the very changes its logic impedes. For while independence is still the democratic cry of peoples everywhere, interdependence is their looming common destiny. Yet democracy remains tethered to sovereignty and to nineteenth century conceptions of popular rule in which territorial frontiers demarcate jurisdiction and legitimacy. This dependency on sovereign independence renders suspect its adaptability to the novel twenty-first conditions that have been introduced by interdependence -- that globalization of everything from markets and technology to public health and terrorism that is our seeming fate. The globalization, that is to say, of everything except the democratic institutions meant to respond to global challenges.

This asymmetry between the challenges of interdependence and the political realities of independence constitutes democracy's is daunting: the problems grow ever more global, while the institutions remain haplessly local, trapped inside the nation-state box. In the face of interdependent forces of environmental degradation, weapons proliferation, global crime, planetary disease, non-state terrorism and international markets in capital, labor and commodities, the democratic institutions that are supposed to monitor and regulate such forces remain obstinately provincial. Hence the irony of 193 sovereign nations convening at Copenhagen to take up global climate change explaining why in fact their virtuous sovereignty does not permit them to act in common to ward off collective catastrophe. The paradox of participation that defines this new looming age of virtual interdependence is then taking on the aspect of a terminal civic illness.

Too often, where it ought to be cosmopolitan, democracy has responded to challenges across frontiers parochially. It still boasts of its proud origins in independence in an era that is necessarily interdependent. Faced with a twenty-first century enemy after 9/11, the malevolent non-governmental organization al Qaeda, the President of the United States responded with 19th century hard military power, and went looking for a rogue nation state that once would have been deemed the only possible sponsor of such a deed. But Afghanistan no more attacked NewYork than Hong Kong engineered avian flu or Columbia initiated the world drug trade. The world's frontiers grow porous and permeable even as we celebrate them by insisting on the relevance of sovereignty. Democracy's challenges have all gone global, while democracy is locked up inside of frontiers without which it imagines it cannot survive. And so while we speak easily enough of consumers without frontiers, health plagues without frontiers, ecology without

frontiers, wars without frontiers, markets without frontiers and technology without frontiers, we cannot begin to imagine citizens without frontiers or democracy without frontiers.

Is it possible then that our modern conception of popular sovereignty that is still tied to a nationalist social contract and territorial states can realistically aspire to universalize liberty and rights? Or, as Seyla Benhabib has asked, whether universal rights can be applied locally without a contextualization that may or may not be consistent with the meaning of rights? Can democracy be defended in claustrophobic national settings that are unable to respond to global threats?

The clear message seems to be that democracy is going to have to turn innovative forms of globalization to its own uses in order to survive. Digital technologies like the internet and novel institutional hybrids like global cities and transnational non-governmental organizations representing cross-border NGOs are likely to be the condition for democracy's sustainability in an age of interdependence. New realities that seem, if anything, like impediments will have to become facilitators of democracy's aspirations. The paradox of participation demands that we simultaneously centralize and globalize power *and* decentralize and localize participation will have to be addressed globally, although it has yet even to be successfully confronted nationally. After all, representation and party government have not always served democracy well inside the sovereigntist box. In the United States, the tea party movement is a rebellion not only against the challenges of a fearsome global economy but against the specter of a powerful national government. People yearn for a localism and sense of direct engagement that large bureaucratic institutions do not afford them, and find themselves challenging

national government even as it proves itself incompetent to treat with transnational crises such as the one in global financial institutions.

Civic engineering for a new global age of democracy will entail an imaginative look at innovative institutions – or entail adapting old institutions in an innovative setting. Adapting to interdependence might, for example, be served by a new look at confederalism – the first manifestation of American constitutionalism at the time of the founding, and a weak but therefore tolerable form of federalism the Europeans have put to good use in experimenting with pooled sovereignty (though its limits have become evident in the current economic crisis, which threatens to turns Europe (in the words of *Die Zeit* publisher Josef Joffe) into "a huge welfare state for everybody, for states as well as individuals,"(NYT, February 16, 2010).

Prospective transnational solutions will have to exploit and build on the old global governance systems, however inadequate, represented by the United Nations and the Bretton Woods International Financial Institutions. But they will also need to experiment with new governance ideas – a representative assembly of non-governmental organizations, for example, or an association of global cities. This may help place old social institutions in new roles, using global cities already more networked into an interdependent world than into the nation-states to which they nominally belong as building blocks for global governance, for example. For such cities will be far less concerned with fading but still potent notions like sovereignty and autonomy than are the nation states usually deemed to be the more appropriate actors in a globalizing world. And in the face of the spatial and territorial limits of real communities, democracy will certainly have to experiment with virtual communities -- communities that may have

more in common with FaceBook and YouTube than with a New England Town Meeting or a State Legislature -- although no one should imagine that such deeply apolitical, some would contend anti-political, social networking instruments are unproblematic or automatic allies of either interdependence or democracy.

Democracy's next age, if it is to have one, will in other words have to be both universal (pooled global sovereignty, for example) *and* local (power devolved, perhaps via confederalism, for example). It will have to resolve the paradox of participation by making central global power participatory at the local level. "Glocal" say the futurist pundits – except it will have to actually mean something. For *glocal* to be more than a precious slogan that pretends to overcome an oxymoron by dissolving its contradictions in a single word, democratic innovation will have to be visible in new technological and institutional realities to which today's democracies often seem antagonistic when not altogether insensible. And democracy will have to figure out how to preserve those underlying communities of solidarity and fellowship on which social capital and citizenship, and hence democracy itself, depend – even as it adapts to global circumstances inherently corrosive to them.

The Problem of Scale:

Aristotle wrote that a polis can be no more encompassing than a man can walk across in a day… so that he can attend the popular assembly as required. His premise was that democracy meant a small-scale polity, and could not survive large-scale growth.

Like people everywhere, Americans have a feel for -- a sense of palpable connection to -- the PTA that oversees the schools where their kids are enrolled, the town zoning board that keeps a bar or prison out of their neighborhood, and the city council where

their neighbors help govern the municipality in which their lives are played out. But such local institutions have little power over the forces of global warming, global financial crisis, global terrorism and global health plagues that threaten these same individual American lives. On the other hand, the European Bank in Frankfurt, NATO, the International Monetary Fund, the World Health Organization and the Department of Homeland Security impact such threats directly, but Americans have no relationship to let alone influence over them at all.

This dilemma captures the so-called "paradox of participation" precipitated by scale, democracy's perennial challenge. For participation is local, while power is central. As the scale of society grows, participation and power are driven apart. The distance between the citizen and the power under which the citizen must live increases, compelling government to adopt less participatory institutions, which leaves democracy ever more in doubt and turns citizens into disgruntled rebels, alienated from democratic institutions that supposedly represent them, and angry at the delegates they choose to represent them. Reactionary populism of the kind embodied in the Tea Party Movement in the United States and the anti-immigrant nationalist parties in Europe indicate how alienating and dangerous the failures of participation in modern democracy can become.

I will recall here only very summarily how two previous ages of small-scale and national democracy dealt with the challenges of scale other than to note that their successes have been superseded by an impending third global age in which scale again makes democracy vulnerable. In democracy's first age, a stage of participation and engagement, the modest size of the polis, the tribe and the township assured commensurability between participation and power of a kind that was ideally suited to

self-legislation. The tribesman knew his kinsmen as brothers; the citizen (as Aristotle commented) was always less than a day's walk from the assembly. Participation was power's equal, because they shared the same space. Although it was partly due to limitations on the citizen body determined by gender, property or birth, the governed *were* the governors. Citizens were rulers and subjects. Legislation meant self-legislation.

In democracy's next stage, in the face of increasing scale and both territorial and demographic growth, institutional innovation to rescue democracy became imperative. New ideas like representation, federalism and the social contract were introduced that allowed the idea of democracy to survive despite the withering of participation. A second age of democracy was born in which, notwithstanding the increased distance between the citizen and the polity – between participation and sovereign power or the individual and the state – a new political formula was fashioned that permitted democracy to be restored. A novel conception of the artificial state as a product of a social contract established the powerful new democratic idea of "popular sovereignty" as a form of tacit consent. Sovereignty conceived as a representation of the people's will (the making of law) in turn permitted individual liberty to be rescued from the demand that accompanied the social contract that people give up their natural liberty to secure safety of life and property. In the new formula, where sovereignty was to be exercised by delegated governors who were to act in the name of the people's will, the people retained a portion of power even as they relinquished participation. In giving up some of their liberty, they effectively guaranteed the rest.

There were, however, costs associated with tacit consent (an obviously weaker form of consent than active participation) as well as with representation. Both had a tendency

to alienate the voter from engaged citizenship and risked a culture of elitism in those elected as delegates (later called "the iron law of oligarchy" because the elected seemed inevitably to lose sight of the interests of the electors). These costs weakened democratic principles in democracy's second stage, and are associated with some of its defects in the modern era. One might argue scale has exacted costs that, for all of their virtues, representative institutions have not been able to compensate.

With the history of democracy's earlier struggles with the paradox of participation ages as context, the crucial question posed by interdependence is whether democracy can survive our own era as scale goes global and the gulf between participation and power becomes seemingly unbridgeable; as the paradox of participation threatens to render democratic governance completely impossible. Can democracy survive this challenge? That depends on how well innovative institutions can deal with the need to move beyond independence and sovereignty without losing the community and solidarity on which democracy depends.

From Independence to Interdependence:

> From the Declaration of Independence to the anti-colonial wars of liberation of the last 75 years, for citizens to be free and secure has meant their country had to be independent. If liberty and independence go hand in hand, how can democracy survive interdependence?

In many ways, the English colonists living in North America from the time of Jamestown and Plymouth Rock to the War of Independence of 1776 were already self-governing in local affairs, subject in commonwealths and townships as much to their own authority as to that of a distant monarch. Colonists throughout the English, French, Dutch and Spanish overseas empires were afforded a degree of autonomy and self-rule by

default. Yet in America, a powerful ideology – some might say mythology – grew up around the ideal of interdependence, especially as the aspiration to democracy spread among what some came to call "new American man." The mythology of independence embraced the idea that the freedom of individuals depended on the total autonomy of the state. Even in the ancient world, tribes prized their autonomy, the Greek polis celebrated it "autarky" (economic self-sufficiency), and townships were thought to thrive to the degree their walls could fend off encroaching feudal jurisdictions and the expansive principalities and kingships knocking on their portals. In the subsequent age of representative democracy, the essential legitimacy of the social contract was deemed to depend on the capacity of a sovereign to defend national borders against invaders and outsiders. The social contract both created and depended for its authority on independence and territorial integrity. The autonomous individual celebrated in modern social contract theory found a complement in the autonomous state. Since autonomy was a feature of sovereignty's core meaning, the autonomous sovereign nation became the sine quo non of what it meant, in the inspiring language of social contract, to protect life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness. Legitimate power entailed sovereign independence.

In founding the Puritan Commonwealth, the early American settlers made explicit this association of liberty and independence. In 1776 that equation was ratified in the Declaration of Independence. Even today, emerging nations struggle to establish themselves as independent as a condition for their security, their liberty and their democracy. Iraq's wished-for democratic sovereignty is conditional on it independence, as both its internal politicians and facilitating occupiers agree.

Yet as democracy confronts the global age, independence has become ever more counter-productive to the struggle for freedom. Even hegemons like the United States are learning how difficult it can be for nations to act alone in the traditional spirit of independence. For today's brute realities evince a stubborn and ineluctable interdependence that arises out of economic, epidemiological, ecological, technological and other emerging conditions reflecting a networked world. These conditions mandate civic and political institutions capable of acting across territorial frontiers to treat effectively with them. Such institutions must be invented where they do not already exist, and democracy must free itself from the nation-state box and the once intoxicating but today crippling embrace of independence. Democracy can survive interdependence, but only if we can offer a new model of sustainable democratic globalization that addresses the paradox of participation.

After Sovereignty: Rewriting a Social Contract For a World Without Frontiers

> America was founded on a Declaration of Independence and other documents comprising a social contract in which the legitimacy of the new government was rooted in the consent of the people. Democracy extended to the frontiers defined by sovereignty and no further. From Washington and Lincoln to Roosevelt and Bush, American Presidents have insisted democracy and citizenship are defined by frontiers. How then can democracy survive after sovereignty is gone?

Sovereignty may be an abstraction elusive to ordinary citizens, but they are familiar enough as taxpayers and recipients and overseers of government services with the not always welcome idea that the government they elect and that rules in their name is the only institution with the authority and the right to exercise power over them in all those public affairs that effect them in common. If there is some virus infecting their children, they expect the state or local health authorities to deal with it, if there is a drug problem

in the neighborhood, they expect the local or federal police to step in. If there is a threat

to national security, they expect their representatives to assure their safety. That is

sovereignty's palpable meaning. In democracy's second stage, sovereignty emerged from

a theory of social contract that endowed force with the authority of popular consent and

offered representation as the key to democratic governance. Today, however, the old

formula is in peril. State health authorities cannot protect people from Avian flu or new

mutations of the AIDs virus. The drug trade involves narco-states like Columbia and

Afghanistan that local and federal police are powerless to control. Global warming

proceeds whether or not nations take sovereign action, or refuse to do so in the name of

their sovereignty. So much for sovereignty.

New realities of interdependence challenge sovereignty and the "sovereign borders" it

once defined, and in doing so undermine the traditional social contract that helped define

sovereignty. Sovereign authorities no longer seem to be able to control all (some might

say *any* of) those things that go on within a nation's borders. The United States can

neither control immigration into the country nor the flow of jobs and whole industries

out. China's opaque national health system is a global problem. Terrorism cannot be

arrested by the assertion of sovereign military might. The power that sovereignty reflects

remains legitimate but no longer seems efficient or effective. The great challenge of

democracy today is to rewrite the social contract in ways appropriate to a "post-

sovereign" age of interdependence and globalization, but given sovereignty's intimate

historical association with the territorial nation state this is no easy task.

Sovereignty has undergone two kinds of erosion: the first has been a result of the

marketization of politics and the privatization of public goods within nation states,

moving sovereignty from the political to the economic realm as a concomitant of what Niall Ferguson has described as the "ascent of money." The impact of this marketization of sovereign affairs is all too evident in the current global fiscal crisis, where national governments and national banks are struggling to contend with not just global market forces but with deregulated and privatized institutions inside their national borders that resist regulation. The claim that a national governments can deal with markets in toxic assets generated by privatized Ponzi schemes and non-transparent hedge funds has gone from a foolish boast to a palpable fiction.

Yet there is a second problem: along with this internal weakening of political sovereignty via privatization and the neo-liberal ideology that supports it has come an external compromising by globalization, which has robbed traditional nation states of their natural jurisdiction and capacity to govern. Consequently, rescuing sovereignty requires not only restoring the idea of the public within states, but elaborating a notion of the public that is global in a private market world.

One approach to internationalizing sovereignty pioneered by the European Community "pools" sovereignty in a way that maintains its core jurisdictional meaning yet still allows it to operate across frontiers. Just how "pooled" such sovereignty actually is, however, is being tested by the current economic crisis (which is bringing out nationalist-sovereigntist tendencies in Europe's ever more skeptical national societies). A journalist commented recently that the crisis has "revealed how deeply national identity, rather than a common European identity, remains the reality on the Continent. Solidarity, at least in the eyes of most voters, still stops at the border."(Nicholas Kulish, NYTimes, February 16, 2010).

However, interdependence will also require moving beyond sovereignty altogether and seeking other instrumentalities of global governance that supersede it, as representation once superseded the participatory notions of the ancients. Alternative organizational entities are likely to emerge (or must be catalyzed) whose defining mark is not sovereignty and borders but networking and interactivity – global cities or virtual communities of "netizens" who understand themselves as global rather than national participants. One imagines a kind of cosmopolis bound together not by central sovereign power but the networks typical of "super-organisms" (like ant colonies, for example, or the earth's ecology).

Whatever its institutional variations, however, global governance will demand a new social contract that is constrained neither by population nor territory but is universal to the human species and that extends citizenship universally. Exactly what sort of cosmopolitan citizenship can withstand universalization and still confer meaningful civic solidarity is an open question, to be however.

Global Cites as Global Governance Building Blocks

> The United Nations is an assembly of nation-states. When national governments consider global government, they anticipate that they will themselves have to be the building blocks that international government will be built from a Congress of nations. But it is precisely states that interdependence renders obsolete. Can democracy then survive -- can it have a future beyond the state?

A taxi-driver in London told me recently that he had hacked in New York, New Delhi and London, and was considering joining a relative who drove a cab in Mexico City. I asked him about which country he preferred, and he seemed not to understand the question: he lived in a world of mega-cities easily distinguished but with an urban

familial resemblance more significant to him than the national differences pertaining to the countries these cities occupy. Given that much of the world's population lives in town and cities, among which global metropolises ("megalopolises") of ten to twenty-five million inhabitants, my driver's experience is likely to become ever more prevalent. After all, why should not the multicultural and mobile populations of these cities feel a greater connection to the networked metropolis where they live and work and to others like it than to the particular country defining their nominal nationality or citizenship?

In democracy's earliest age of participation, the township and municipality were democracy's building blocks; in its second age of representative government, the nation-based state – a "people" -- defined democracy's compass. For democracy to move beyond the state and its frontiers will require a new institutional building block that is appropriate to the civic architecture of a globalized world. The easy assumption that global government must be a global reflection of the nation-state writ large needs to be challenged. Constructing a global government on building blocks whose sovereignty is the primary obstacle to global governance is a poor idea whose difficulties are evident in clumsy international organizations from the League of Nations to the United Nations as well as in international institutions comprised by state actors (the G-8, or G-20) defined by their sovereignty. Nation-states will obviously not go away. Nor are they likely to be the only or even the dominant constituents of new approaches to global governance. So exploring alternatives -- global cities, but also regional associations -- is an inviting option.

Transnational entities such as Europe, North America (NAFTA), the African Union, or the Organization of American States that are comprised by states but now constitute

supra-national entities may help nation-states transition to global government. Within nations, global cities may become every more robust and appropriate building blocks for governance. Cities were born as small towns in democracy's first age and prospered as industrial, cultural and trade centers and state capitals in its second; given their role today as innovative global centers of trade, communication, transportation, labor mobility, cultural and intellectual creativity, and as coordinating service hubs for the post-industrial economy's core businesses from accounting and finance to advertising and marketing, a new breed of global cities is emerging uniquely suited for what Saskia Sassen describes as "the practice of global control: the work of producing and reproducing the organization and management of a global production system and a global marketplace for finance." The issue is not power but "the production of those inputs that constitute the capability for global control." (*The New Global City*, p. 6).

The new global cities stand in a special relationship to culture and creativity that is manifested both in the service sector and in the arts domain. Museums, theaters, galleries, concert halls, dance spaces, literary publishing houses, universities, magazines and newspapers comprise an intellectual domain that not only defines much of what is cosmopolitan and urban about the city, but also helps define its role in the post-industrial service economy. The natural affinity that links artists, writers and intellectuals throughout the world is the very definition of cosmopolitanism. For this reason, quite aside from culture's considerable intrinsic merit, any consideraation of the role of global cities in global governance must incorporate a careful exploration of the role of art and culture.

New global cities and their relationship to the "networked society" that has preoccupied scholars like Manuel Castels show great promise then as a foundation for global governance, especially in comparison with nation-states, which remain the heart of the conventional paradigm of international relations.. Yet they also present significant drawbacks as global building blocks. Global cities are paradigms of global opportunity and global mobility, but they also underscore global inequality. Writers like Mike Davis have rightly complained that what enthusiasts call global cities are often more like global slums, whose mega-populations are entombed in poverty and cut off from the very post-industrial economic revolutions that Saskia Sassen sees as their promise (Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 2006).

Even more dramatic issues are raised by representation. Although they concentrate the world's population and realize a new and startling demographic density, cities do not comprehend the planet's people and representing cities globally leaves out billions. Even if, as Davis has written, "rural people no longer have to migrate to the city, it migrates to them," (p. 9), and even though villages are becoming market towns and towns growing into small cities, no fair system of global representation can be founded on cities alone. This raises a formidable architectural and political objection to giving them a special role. But given that they already are overrepresented globally in what is fast becoming a "world of cities" for the reasons Sassen and others adduce, looking to formalize and legitimize that representation is a worthy task. Perhaps global voting will be conducted on a universal basis, but with citizens coting through proximate cities rather than

traditional nation states. In the Middle Ages, denizens of the countryside migrated into walled towns to protect themselves from roving bands and invading marauders. In the post-modern era, denizens of the countryside might migrate to the city for purposes of voting and global representation. It is not so much the people of global cities as their service functions and networked associations that constitute their cosmopolitan essence, so it is *qua* cities rather than *qua* their constitutive populations that their representation is most crucial and that they will have a special role to play. For the very features of cities that define them, their cosmopolitanism, connectivity, urbanity, density, multiculturalism and creativity, will be the characteristics that constitute and legitimize the cosmopolis.

Global cities today are in fact already more closely linked to one another, to global markets and to the post-industrial knowledge and service economies than to the traditional territorial nation-states to which they nominally belong, making them appropriate initial building blocks for a global order. Centers of communication and trade defined by their relationship to technology and transportation, they appear to be more adaptable to virtuality than the nation-state. To say New York, London or Tokyo (Sassen's trilogy) is not anymore just to say the United States, England or Japan, anymore than to say Mumbai, St. Paulo or Moscow is to say India, Brazil or Russia. So although all citizens will require representation in an eventual world order and cities surely cannot have weighted votes, no reference to nation-states will be required to build an architecture of global governance, while global cities will play a central role..

Globalizing Community Without Eroding Solidarity

> Following Rousseau, the French revolutionaries exhorted their countrymen to uphold "liberty, equality and fraternity." They knew that the formal institutions of democracy could never bond together a people into a citizenry or forge the common spaces on which democracy depended. Only a community, a neighborhood, or social capital can do that for these are what produce fraternity and patriotism. The lesson was that liberty and equality demanded community and fraternity and could not survive without them. Or is it possible to keep social capital when community goes global? To globalize community and yet preserve solidarity? To secure cosmopolitan fraternity?

When Americans stopped bowling together in teams and playing bridge together in social card clubs, sociologists like Robert Putnam started worrying that the social glue – the "social capital" – that held together America's plural society might be evaporating, leading critics such as Samuel Huntington to warn that the nation might be at risk of falling apart around its social fissures: a crisis in social capital.

It was different with the early townships and polis-based tribes that defined democracy's early rise, for these tightly wound communities offered democracy the solidarity, fellowship and fraternity that bound together the polity. By exploiting common identity and encouraging consensus on fundamental values, they could tolerate disagreement on policy and practice. In democracy's subsequent age of representation, community morphed into society (*Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft* were the preferred terms 19th century sociologists like Ferdinand Toennies employed to highlight the distinction), and "thick" ascriptive communities gave way to thinner and less coherent forms of discretionary (voluntary or chosen) association; under these circumstances. Civic architects were compelled to look for an artificial social cement that might bind together citizens who were technically united only by self-interest, and the social contract. Ideologies of nationalism, patriotism and civil religion were fashioned to

substitute for community's natural coherence. Sociological thinkers from Rousseau and Comte to John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville observed that modern representative democracies derived their "social capital" or bonding glue from civil society, civil religion and civic republicanism rather than from their formal democratic processes. Common ground demanded more than common voting. Equality in the absence of fraternity seemed improbable.

Global democratic governance, whatever its mechanisms, will be even more sociologically challenged. If social capital is in decline within nation states (as Robert Putnam and Huntington worry), how can it prosper in a global setting? If neighbors no longer bowl together, will global strangers ever do so or find a rewarding surrogate (going on the mass multi-player on-line video game "Second Life" together?) The thick social relationships afforded by (and to a degree invented for) the nation state in the civil societies on which they have depended will be hard pressed to survive let alone flourish under conditions of globalization.

Hence, a formidable challenge to the construction of global democracy will be to find forms of community and fraternity that can act as bonding agents to hold together the abstract and "thin" civic fabric that a global society will inevitably generate. The very term "global citizenship" seems oxymoronic – the abstract global entity (whatever it is) too large and abstract to afford citizens the forms of civic association, common beliefs and values, and social glue that every democratic community requires. To be an Indonesian or a Nigerian or a Canadian is already an exercise in imagination that requires a mixture of civic identity, local ethnicity and common religion hard to come by (Samuel

Huntington's complaint.) To be a world citizen will be ever so much more demanding on imagination. How to turn planetoids back into neighbors?

What will be needed is a re-imagined form of universal social capital that can be produced by virtual communities and networked cities. The dilemma for citizens on an interdependent world will be made still more complicated by the reality of global multiculturalism, which would appear to make it nearly impossible to forge commonality from.

Making Global Democracy Multicultural

> Samuel Huntington has argued that radical diversity and cultural heterogeneity unhinge self-government Because democracy depends on consensus, it must be firmly rooted in mono-cultures, as it has in nations like England, France, Sweden and Poland. Can democracy exist beyond mono-culture in increasingly multicultural societies and a planet that is by definition heterogeneous and plural?

The Berber desert tribesman knows what it means to be a Berber, but though Libya is predominantly Berber it is also Taureg and Arab – comprised too by many other tribes and ethnicities. Ireland is still pretty much defined by Celtic Catholics, who know what it means to be Irish. But what's a German when millions of Germans are Turks and Greeks and Croatians, and what's an American when the only native Americans are native Indians who are technically something more and other than ordinary American citizens (too generic and aboriginal to be "new American men" in the modern sense)? Multiculturalism in fact presents a special challenge to scale.

Both in the ancient polis, and in the modern nation-state, mono-cultures helped overcome scale by affording a "common people" their common values, common language, common history and common religion. Dorset, Provence, Bengal, New

England, Thailand, and Japan all represent geographic regions with a relatively mono-cultural identity, united by the ethnicity of the people who populate them. Since, as we have seen above, democracy demands thick forms of civic association and a sense of common ground and common social capital, successful democratic societies, with a few notable exceptions, have tended historically to be mono-cultural, deriving their commonality and social capital from a singular national culture – even if that culture has to some degree been invented.

But among modern democracies, there are numerous exceptions, many quite notable. Think, for example, not just of the United States, but also Nigeria, India, Canada, Iraq, Indonesia and Brazil inter alia, all of which suggest that multi-cultures can be adapted to democracy if   a civil religion or secular civic values or common republican history can provide some of the "thick" identity and solidarity traditionally associated with mono-culture.

The challenge remains daunting, however, since the reality is that even in the successful national models that have embraced multiculturalism there has been fractiousness, social bigotry, national breakdown and civil war that have exposed and tracked ethnic and religious fissures. Many multi-religious countries have yet to reconcile the great divide separating Christians, Muslims, Hindus and others. And even within Arab or Christian nations, fractious sectarianism drives Sunnis and Shiites (Iraq) or Catholics and Protestants (Northern Ireland) apart, breeding widespread violence and social disruption. Most of the recently collapsed multinational (or multi-tribal) states such as Yugoslavia, Somalia, the Soviet Union and Afghanistan offer examples of what happens in the absence of a centripetal national core where there is no single people or

ethnicity or religion to cohere around. Samuel Huntington and other pessimists have even insisted that 'successful' multicultural societies like the United States are likely to implode under the pressure of ongoing multicultural immigration.

Yet a global democratic governance system will necessarily be irrevocably multicultural, with little hope of achieving even a weak consensus on beliefs or values, let alone finding common ethnic, linguistic, cultural or tribal roots. If Tauregs and Berbers can clash in Libya, how are Tauregs and Cherokees to get along under some common global governing mechanism? If Ultra-orthodox Jews challenge the legitimacy of the Zionist state of Israel, how will they be persuaded to comply with the laws of an entity dominated by Hindu capitalists, Mandarin Secularists, Muslim theocrats and American individualists? Common citizenship will mandate commonality but commonality of the kind derived from the stores of historically specific mono- or even multi-cultural traditions that have sustained states in the past, will not be available. Cosmopolitanism has been a mantra of intellectual; can it become an ideology of common civic life for global citizenship?.

There are some sources of hope. Successful multicultural democracies have demonstrated a capacity not only to survive multiculturalism but to use it as a tool of democracy and are worthy of study – especially in light of invented forms of commonality like civic republicanism and civil religion. The nineteenth century empires that united diverse cultures (as distinct from their overseas tentacles that subordinated and enslaved other cultures) such as the Austrian-Hungarian and the Ottoman empires also need to be examined for lessons they might hold for trans-ethnic and transnational

governance. The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation may also be worth scrutinizing.

Yet it is cities that may be the key to addressing the challenge of multiculturalism. For cities have always been more multicultural than the nations to which they belong (compare cosmopolitan Paris with its fruitful mix of Maghrebian, Caribbean, African and Middle Eastern populations with the traditional mono-cultural face of "*la France profonde;*" or contrast Los Angeles, the city of 161 languages spoken in public schools with Little Rock, Arkansas, where the specter of Spanish as a second language can drive some mono-cultural nativists wild). The anonymity, creativity and cosmopolitanism of cities have drawn people to urban centers and then helped cities prosper by exploiting the energy with which newcomers fuel their metropolitan urbanity. Indeed, ideologies of cosmopolitanism – the culture of joined poleis – hold considerable promise for global democratic governance, both in their traditional form in the empires of the nineteenth century and in the philosophies of cosmopolitanism nurtured by them (see Martha Nussbaum and Kwame Anthony Appiah, for example). Rooted as cosmopolitanism is in education, travel, exposure to others and the tolerance for diversity these breed, it manifests a sensibility uniquely suited to post-modernity – to the women and men who, educated in the multicultural richness of global cities, and conversant in the ways of the world-wide-web and the networks associated with trade and communication are more "evolved" than others historically when it comes to tolerance, compassion, imagination and hence democracy. In fact, the web plays a very special role in the future of democracy in an age of interdependence.

Web Architecture and Global Participation

> Howard Dean and Barack Obama revolutionized participatory presidential politics in the last four years. Can the internet, so promising a resource in these political campaigns, also facilitate the survival of democracy in an era of interdependence? Web architecture affords communication at the speed of light among diverse peoples right across the globe. Can virtuality then finally offer global response to the challenge of scale?

The world-wide-web has an inherently democratic architecture, widely remarked on since my own first allusion to digital technology's promise in my 1984 *Strong Democracy* discussion of the Warner-Amex Qube System. The new technology's point to point character (like the telephone), its inactivity, its horizontal focus on lateral rather than vertical or hierarchical interaction, its openness to so-called "wiki-logic" (participatory epistemology of the kind found in open source software or *Wikepedia*) and its capacity for instant collective communication and decision-making over great distances all have the potential to facilitate democracy on a global scale. If distance is the obstacle scale places in the path of democratic participation, virtuality is a potential break-through.

Yet the web also has features than contradict democracy: speed, a seeming virtue which is nonetheless counter-productive to deliberation and careful multi-stage decision-making; the absence of authority, since democracy absent authority can breed anarchy and mob rule; and an unsubtle digital logic of on/off or yea/nay that foils complex multi-choice democratic thinking and public deliberation. In other words, the new digital and electronic technologies are *tools* that can both serve and impede democracy.

Nonetheless, it is the virtues of web architecture that are of special relevance to democracy over great distances among diverse peoples, and they do promise to solve a number of the questions raised by the passing of sovereignty, of mono-culture and of the social contract in their traditional forms. "Virtual community" and "the electronic/digital

commons" can provide thicker forms of fellowship than are permitted by trans-national association.

Although the use of the Web in political campaigns like Howard Dean's and Barack Obama's have often merely replicated traditional representative politics in a virtual form, some innovations suggest the possibility of transforming how we understand and conduct politics, and open up the possibility of a participatory politics far more encompassing than anything the ancient world could imagine: elements of genuine direct democracy despite global political scale.

Digitalizing Freedom

> *Wired Magazine* introduced the neologism "netizen" to a broader public Yet citizens are traditionally neighbors: community members who share a common history, common beliefs, and common values – people who stand literally on common ground. Digital technology offers this strange new form of netizenship where virtual community and digital relationships supposedly offer new forms of virtual common ground. Can it save democracy in an age of interdependence?

Essential to democracy is engaged citizenship. Yet citizenship rooted in education and civil society seems particularly constrained by traditional territorial boundaries, while successful global governance will demand global citizenship. Virtuality offers a path forward. If it can be shown that it is linguistically meaningful and politically realistic to deploy the language of an "electronic commons" – that is to say, to speak concretely about "virtual citizenship," "virtual civic education," "virtual civil society," "virtual participation" and "virtual community" -- in describing global democracy, then global democratic governance can be made more than just an abstract aspiration.

We have already witnessed the rapid growth of social networking (*MySpace* and *FaceBook*), electronic text and video messaging (email, *Twitter*) and information and

opinion sharing (Google, blogging, *YouTube*) of kinds that have transformed

communication. Yet the changes have occurred almost entirely within commercial

society where the new technologies have been private, personal and for-profit instruments

offered to individual consumers by commercial firms. Mass MultiplayerVideo games

such as *Second Life* and *World of Warcraft* have also proliferated, but again primarily as

commercial commodities and private playthings, if sometimes with an implicit social

character (as with *The Sims*).

In order to deploy these games for civic, educational and political purposes, we need

not only to put them in a different context, but ask whether they can survive the changed

context without losing their unique character. Critics doubt they have a civic use. For the

web tends to foster not "encounters among strangers" (democracy's condition) but

voluntary and privatized (even narcissistic) self-expression and communication within

networks aimed at linking friends, associates and people of like mind; or to proffer games

and simulations created for commercial entertainment rather than educational or civic

purposes. In order for the new technologies to become instruments of global democratic

governance, the web and digital technology will have to live up to the extravagant hopes

of ardent partisans at institutions like the *Electronic Frontier Foundation*, the Berkman

Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School or *Wired Magazine*.

My own answer here is a qualified affirmation of the new technology's potential to

serve global participatory democracy. But it will not happen as a matter of course or as a

result of natural evolution, but only under specific conditions that need to be carefully

planned and executed – conditions contradictory to the "natural" drift of current

commercial culture. "Digitalizing freedom" could offer an intoxicating shortcut to

preserving democracy in the setting of global governance. For this to happen, it must

become a practical strategy rather than just the dream of digital idealists, however.

Confederalism, Global Cities and Virtual Citizenship as Responses to "Glocality"

> World government has always been a utopia of tree-huggers and wild-eyed
> idealists. For the challenge of scale argues that democracy cannot be globalized or
> even survive the challenges of interdependence. Yet there is a system of global
> democracy rooted in cities and virtual citizenship and organized around
> confederalism that can turn "glocality" into a solution to the paradox of
> participation. Democracy in the age of interdependence is not only possible but a
> mandate of political realism. There is no alternative. For democracy either
> survives interdependence or expires.

If democracy is to survive into a new global age, we will either have to democratize

globalization or globalize democracy. For only then can the problem of scale be solved

by reconciling power and participation on the global plane. In considering the prospect,

we will need to explore institutional models for globalizing democracy, focusing

particularly on the question of whether traditional institutions including the United

Nations system, the Bretton Woods regime of International Financial Institutions, and

international law as the product of treaties among sovereign nation states can become the

basis for a transition to global democratic governance. Or whether a radically alternative

architecture of say global cities networked into a global confederal association might be

required. Certainy new thinking and new intuitional inventiveness are required if the

transition is to succeed in overcoming the dead weight of increasingly dysfunctional but

ever and omnipresent sovereigntist thinking.

In their year-end apotheosizing of the outgoing Bush Administration's record, John

Bolton, the former U.S. representative to the United Nations and his Bush administration

colleague John Yoo warned that "America needs to maintain its sovereignty and

autonomy, not to subordinate its policies, foreign or domestic, to international control. On

a broad variety of issues — many of which sound more like domestic rather than foreign policy — the re-emergence of the benignly labeled "global governance" movement is well under way in the Obama transition." As things turned out, they vastly overestimated the Obama internationalist surge.

But their fear of global governance masquerading as stubborn national pride suggests that leaving global democracy to the traditional instruments of the international system, if a necessary step, will be insufficient. The United Nations is not global governance but government by an assembly of squabbling sovereign nations engaged in sovereign interest-mongering, dominated by powerful nations with Security Council vetoes that no longer even reflect the real power relations of the 21st century world (where India and Brazil, for example, are as worthy of representation on the Council as England and France).   Likewise, international law offers powerful abstract precedents that go back to Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace*, and will play a significant role. But as Hobbes understood, covenants without the sword are of little moment in securing life or liberty, and in its application and enforcement international law not only falls short but too often makes a mockery of the needs of global justice. For these reasons, globalizing democracy is likely to rest heavily on institutional innovation and new thinking.

The institutional realization of a global democratic governance system that defeats the challenge of scale will require, above all, an architecture that softens the paradox of participation: reconciling local participation with centralized power. I have already noted that the contradiction between power and participation is sometimes resolved (if rather vaguely) with the term "glocality." The actual institutionalization of *glocality* will have to offer room for local participation that does not impede central control; and it will have to

legitimize control over central power without wholly frustrating local participation. It has sometimes been said that the nation-state is the least viable form of modern governance -- too large for meaningful participation but too small to address the global and interdependent issues real power must face. This complaint points to the relevance of confederalism as an institutional frame for effective *glocality*.

Confederalism can be to a new stage of global democracy what direct participation was to first stage democracy and representation was to second stage democracy. Mandating a devolution of power to regions, states, and most importantly, global cities -- as well as NGOs and other civic associations and movements -- will afford citizens genuine democratic participation without wholly disempowering an effective global government. There are important examples that can offer case studies in both the promise and the problems of confederal systems. A fascinating example remains the Articles of Confederation that served briefly as the constitution of the United States after the Declaration of Independence and before the adoption of the federalist handiwork of 1787 in Philadelphia. A more long-lasting and perhaps more impressive example of confederalism can be found in the Swiss Confederation both before and again after Napoleon's brief and failed experiment with a unitary constitution in 1800. And then there is the already often cited example of the European Union, which has something resembling a confederal arrangement in its relations among member nations, although one more economic and fiscal than political and civic -- with detrimental consequence that are just now being felt with a vengeance. .

The paradox of participation and the challenge of scale are no more fully resolved by confederalism in this new age than they were by representation in democracy's second

age; yet they may be equally well ameliorated. Scale remains intractable, but an electronic commons, global civic solidarity and a global parliament representing civil society offer a way forward.

To be sure, democracy is no more destined to have a third age than it was to have a second. Its promise is little more encouraging than the challenges it faces are daunting. Yet skeptics can chasten their pessimism by recalling democracy's actual history: if men could dream of liberty in the England and the English colonies ruled by King Charles and in the court of *le roi soleil* in Versailles, and yet in time watch their dreams become the liberating realities of 1688 and 1776 and 1789; if American slaves could dream of emancipation and their children and grandchildren could even fantasize that one day in the infinitely remote future an African-American might be elected President of the Republic that had enslaved their forbearers, and come a century later to be deemed prophets rather than fools; and if French and German patriots could stare out at each other through a mist of nationalist hatred and bloody world war in 1914 and again in 1939 and still dream they might one day belong to a common Europe, and then find that dream too would be vindicated not so long thereafter – then surely those who dream today out of the necessity about viable conditions for global democratic governance as the condition for liberty's survival may be regarded not as the soft-headed idealists John Bolton thinks them to be, but instead as the new and deeply imaginative realists of this era of unprecedented interdependence. Which is to say, a new age of democracy tomorrow is no more likely but also no more unlikely today than a birth of democracy was in 500 BC or a rebirth of democracy was in 1615.

CAN DEMOCRACY SURVIVE INTERDEPENDENCE?

THE PARADOX OF PARTICIPATION
IN AN AGE OF INTERDEPENDENCE

THREE AGES OF DEMOCRACY (SCHEMATIZED)

THE FIRST AGE	THE SECOND AGE	THE THIRD AGE
(POLIS)	*(NATION)*	*(GLOBAL CITY)*
Participation	Representation	Confederalism
Face to face 'neighbors'	"One People" (monocultural)	"One World" (Multicultural)
Consensus	Sovereign Majority	Pooled Sovereignty
Integral Power	Divided (limited) power	Devolved Power
Self-legislation	Popular Sovereignty	Empowered Network
Local Power	Central Power	Glocality
Office by lot	Elective Aristocracy	Participatory NGOs
Tribal citizenship	Territorial Citizenship	Virtual Citizenship
The Citizen	A People	Humankind
Neighborhood/Town	Nation-State	Global City
Parochialism	Nationalism	Cosmopolitanism
Community (*Gemeinshcaft*)	Society (*Gesellschaft*)	Cosmopolis
Neighbors	Strangers	Fellow Humans