

# **Reconceptualizing Citizenship: Third Way's Cosmopolitanism vs. New Labour's Renewed Nationalism**

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## **Introduction**

*The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* reads Anthony Giddens's 1998 book title. The conditions under which this renewal is advocated have dramatically changed, from the Keynesian inspired welfare society of the post-WWII nation-states political order to ones of the new hegemony of the neoliberal paradigm in the one superpower one global village era. In the transition, social democracy became a reactionary project, to which the Left, with its enlightenment legacy of optimism, utopianism and relentless belief-in-human-progress is highly unaccustomed. Crucially, it is not only the economic climate which has changed; social democracy became highly associated with a particular conception of citizenship, as embedded in Marshall's notion of social rights.<sup>1</sup> The welfare state provided, well and beyond economic security, a comprehensive political, civic and social framework. Any rethinking – or withdrawal – from the welfare state model has to take into account the other components of collective identity – its political-*cum*-social implications. In order to avoid a reactionary model, a new concept of citizenship had to be devised.

This paper analyzes the restructuring of the public sphere intertwined with the renewal of social democracy. It claims that both the ideas of 'social' and 'democracy' had to be reconceptualized in order for the enlightenment ethos of the left to remain viable. The result is a new understanding of the relationship between politics, economics and civil society. The common wisdom has it, that Anthony Giddens' Third Way theory was adopted and closely implemented by Tony Blair's New Labour. The latter, in his *The Third Way: New Politics for the New Century*, and numerous other pronouncements, indeed makes this notion his own.<sup>2</sup> Yet, the relationship between theorists and politicians were always something of an enigma. Thatcher preferred to draw on religious traditions and national writers and poets; if the need for social theory arose, she chose Adam Smith and Edmund Burke, rarely did she turn to contemporary thinkers, even from the neoliberal

school which had dramatic influence on her politics. The Greens, for whom Marcuse and the Frankfurt school were cultural heroes, were much more attentive to the theoretical discourse, but, as Daniel Cohn-Bendit once disclosed, ‘we all have had *One Dimensional Man* on our shelves. Only a few of us have ever actually read it.’ For New Labour, the relationship with Third Way theory seem to be much more symbiotic. Blair acknowledges the influence of political theory on his thinking, and the concept of civil society becomes instrumental to his way of doing politics differently: “the basic premises of our faith – solidarity; justice; peace and the dignity of the human person – are what we need in the age of globalization. Traditionally, these were religious values. But now we know, through several quite different disciplines, that they are universal values. Economists call them “social capital”.... Political theorists call them communitarism or civil society”.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the fact that Blair knowingly identified himself with the Third Way, this paper argues that the models of social democracy which arise from comparatively assessing Giddens’ theory and Blair’s ideology are distinctively different. For one, the theorist and the politician face different sets of concerns and constraints, even if they agree on the historical analysis and broadly share political principles. On the whole, the analysis of the globalizing economy leads Giddens to opt for a cosmopolitan democracy through a world civil society, whereas PM Blair is confined to the national borders, with a scheme of new solidarity channeled through local organizations. The discussion compares the two versions of social democracy, drawing on social policies, ideology and normative analysis.

### Third Way between Which Ways

Any ‘third way’ project simplifies the world into a binary opposition, into two opposing ways against which it seeks to present either a compromise or a synthesis or an alternative. The first thing to ask about such a project, therefore, is what is the spectrum, what are the two poles, against which a third way is offered. Even on that question the agenda of Giddens and Blair is different; moreover, within Giddens’ thought there is an evolution. Giddens’ 1994 book was called *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics*. It sought to transcend the left/right divide, the constitutive cleavage of modern democratic politics, in the quest for radical politics. While not denying the dominant ideological cleavage – the issue of inequalities – still plays some role on the party system, Giddens’ aspiration is a theoretical one: “radical politics is developed in terms of an outlook of utopian realism.”<sup>4</sup> Left and right, utopianism and realism are the two binary oppositions which the theorist seeks to surpass: to dissociate utopia from the revolutionary subject,

particularly the working class, of the left; and to appropriate realism from the tradition-orientated right. It offers instead, in a post-scarcity era, universal values of a global cosmopolitanism.<sup>5</sup>

Only later does Giddens' project become politicized: "The aim of Third Way thinking – revisionist social-democracy – is to create policies for the centre-left which respond to these (social and economic, G.T.) changes".<sup>6</sup> In this instant, the binary opposition is between socialism and conservatism. Tellingly, the definition of these two ways of thinking is as economic frameworks. Socialism is not defined in terms of the values of equality, social justice and individual self-realization. "Traditional socialist ideas, radical and reformist, were based on the ideas of economic management and planning."<sup>7</sup> Socialism, with intent hint at communism, is equated with planned economy and hostility towards capitalist markets. Conservatism, on the other hand, is defined as an antagonism towards the welfare state, taken as the source of all evils,<sup>8</sup> and an ardent belief in the markets, thriving on individual initiative.<sup>9</sup> Whereas the Soviet Union collapsed and Keynesian ideas, according to Giddens, are largely discredited, "neoliberalism, or market fundamentalism – has been discarded even by its rightist supporters."<sup>10</sup> It is therefore essential to find a third way since the alternatives are no longer viable.

However, there is a third version of the construction of the spectrum, which is raised by Giddens in his discussion of the political frameworks: a third way between the new right and the radical left. Asking whether the idea of the nation can be compatible with ethnic and cultural pluralism, he argues that for conservatives "'one nation' is inherent from the past and must be protected from cultural contamination". Organic nationalism in an age of heterogeneous society is outdated. Alternatively, radical multiculturalists embrace "cultural pluralism at whatever cost to wider solidarity. In this view, national identity has no priority over other cultural claims."<sup>11</sup> Beyond socialism and conservatism, the even wider opening of the political compass is the radical left's borderless multiculturalism on the one end, and reactionary, 'unitary nation' idea of the conservatives on the other extreme. This is even more complicated, as the 'radicalization' of conservative thinking, namely the endorsement of the neoliberal creed, suggests that self-interested individuals and global market economy transgress national borders. "There is a damaging contradiction at the core of neoliberal thought. On the one hand, in encouraging the free play of market forces, neoliberal political philosophy unleashes detraditionalizing influences of a quite far-reaching kind. On the other hand, the very traditional symbols which these influences help to dissolve are held to be essential to social solidarity."<sup>12</sup>

Against anarchic multiculturalism of the radical left and extreme individualism of neoliberalism, or – in its local version, organic nationalism of the Tories – Giddens proposes a vision of reflexive cosmopolitan democracy operating on a global scale.<sup>13</sup>

What are the two ways in the socially reconstructed world of Tony Blair? A Prime Minister can hardly afford to hold an idea of a global democracy as a tangible ideational currency. For Tony Blair, then, the third way is much more concrete and his notions of community and civil society fit the bill of he who believes in ‘one nation, one Britain’. Thus, for him the “third way (is) not old left or new right but a new centre and centre left governing philosophy for the future.”<sup>14</sup> The political task is to distance himself from Old Labour and Thatcherism without alienating the majority of voters on both camps. In economics terms, Blair believes “(t)here is no right or left politics in economic management today. There is good and bad.” Indeed, meritocracy will become his big ideal. The market economy relinquished the trust in the welfare system and created a vacuum: “the Conservatives have systematically divided our nation and eroded the social fabric that holds us together... For far from creating a classless society, the gap between classes has become a gulf.”<sup>15</sup> For New Labour the third way has a much more circumscribed role. First, to distance itself from Old Labour, which is based on a class society in which the party of the left is identified with the poor, the working class and the altruist intelligentsia; second, to present an alternative to Thatcherite politics, which is based on ruthless market individualism blended with reactionary, anti-immigrants on the verge of xenophobic nationalism. For Giddens, the theoretical project is to provide a vital political philosophy fit for a global order; for Blair it is a political task of a party struggling for its public life. The different perceptions of the poles against which the third Way is conceived are summarized in Table 1. Crucially, for both a third way means what Blair calls ‘reconciling’ the two apparently opposing positions,<sup>16</sup> or, in Hegel’s concept, *Aufhebung* – building a synthesis from the two antitheses, by drawing upon some constitutive feature of each of the conflicting poles thus maintaining some of their spirit in the higher synthesis.

**Table 1: The opposing poles against which the Third Way is conceived**

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Way (Left)</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Way (Right)</b>
<b>Giddens 1: Theory</b>	Left: Utopia	Right: Realism
<b>Giddens 2: Economy</b>	Socialism: Planned Economy	Conservatism: Neoliberal market economy
<b>Giddens 3: Politics</b>	Radical Left: Borderless Multiculturalism	New Right: Unitary Nationalism + Neoliberal individualism
<b>Blair/ New Labour: Party ideology</b>	Old Labour: class-based society+politics	Thatcherism: Extreme individualism + ethnic nationalism

**Looking the Other Way**

While certainly communism, but also classic social democracy and Old Labour were erected largely as strawmen, with little prospect of their return from the dead, the main problem of both theoretician and politician was to offer a viable alternative to rightwing politics-cum-economics agenda. This was particularly difficult given the paradigm change in the late twentieth century which, contingently or not, witness simultaneously the rise of the neoliberal hegemony, the collapse of the bipolar cold war order and the globalization of the markets. It provided a new reality against which an alternative was sought. Since it is the political, rather than purely the economic side, that we are interested at, it is worthwhile to set the scene with the neoliberal worldview and its British offspring, Thatcherite conservatism, against which the third way was constructed.

The prime purpose of Hayek and the neoliberal school was to reinstate the opposition between state and economy, central planning and free market, in face of the Keynesian welfare state postwar consensus. Milton Friedman introduces *Capitalism and Freedom* thus: “Its major theme is the role of competitive capitalism – the organization of the bulk of economic activity through private enterprise operating in a free market – as a system of economic freedom and a necessary condition for political freedom. Its minor

theme is the role that government should play in a society dedicated to freedom and relying primarily on the market to organize economic activity”.<sup>17</sup> The major role is one of ‘liberating’ citizens from the grip of a state-induced conformity by returning the strongholds of the welfare state – education, health, employment – into the invisible hand of the market. Thatcher certainly endorsed neoliberalism, and redefined the concept of mixed-economy accordingly:

The true characteristic of ‘the mixed-economy’ is the recognition that Government has a considerable but limited role: and the larger private sector should flourish and expand in the response to the choice of the consumer within the framework of private law. On the Government side this involved setting the priorities.<sup>18</sup>

The circumscription of the place of politics insofar as the economy is concerned is crucial. In order to allow the markets to play a definitive role, the neoliberal view did not rest content with the minimal state vision; it demanded the depoliticization of society by a change of the concept of citizenship. Friedman argues:

What the market does is to reduce greatly the range of issues that must be decided through political means, and thereby to minimize the extent to which government needs to participate directly in the game... It is, in political terms, a system of proportional representation. Each man can vote, as it were, for the color of tie he wants and get it; he does not have to see what color the majority wants and then, if he is in the minority, submit.<sup>19</sup>

Tellingly, neoliberalism replaces the concept of the citizen as a political actor with the image of the citizen as a consumer by appropriating the terminology associated with the democratic system – free choice, voting, consumer rights and proportional representation. The consumer society provides the illusion of politicalness by equating economic choices with political ones. The choices materialize in the consumer society rather than in the political realm by providing an alternative public sphere – yet non-political – where one’s citizenship materializes as a consumer of social and economic goods rather than as a political actor.

This has influenced Thatcher’s worldview immensely; however, while endorsing the need to ‘free’ individuals from the grip of the state by turning their citizenship motivation into actions in the marketplace, in her case it also complements a specific conservative political understanding: once democracy is practiced in civil society, the political realm can be left to a party which controls law and social order. In Thatcher’s

worldview, a weak state coincides with a strong government. Thatcher further radicalized her party's ideology in crucial ways. First, her major revolution was the endorsement of neoliberal market ideology. The party of tradition, nationalism, hierarchy, control and social order transformed its worldview. Thatcher's own unique contribution was the portrayal of this individualistic, competitive, economic ideational system in conservative terms. While breaking down social ties with the trade unions, local communities, workplaces and neighborhoods, and making every man a loner consumer in the marketplace, she managed to retain a moralistic, spiritual bond by rhetorically using the British traditions, religion and nationalism to create an appearance of solidarity. Second, the response to the restructuring of the public sphere was not one of withdrawal or marginalization of the political. While neoliberalism emphasized a market economy, the Tories stressed the crucial role of a strong government leading, rather than complying with, the transition from state management to active consumer society. The Tory government was more centralized, intrusive and controlling than other ruling parties. The consumer society provided a means of dismantling the strongholds of Labour rule. Finally, it facilitates the privatization of the welfare-state. The individual becomes the centerpiece of the analysis. Citizenship is transformed from the universal participation in politics to the free consumer who materializes her rights in making choices in the marketplace. The politics is left for elites which know what is best for Britain.

Even in the rightwing version, theory and politics, economic neoliberalism and Thatcherite conservatism, were not one and the same. Neoliberal theory had no commitment to the nation-states as constitutive part of the world order; global markets trespass national borders. The self-interested individual is the analytical unit and the market mechanisms – supply and demand – provide the economic engine of the world economy. The political ideology of Thatcherism was one which combined a strong belief in the individual and the market, and a strong distaste to state intervention, with a crucial place of the government, of the nation, and of traditional values which substantiated, in her mind, the capitalistic ethos. It is this contradictory ethos that had to be taken on by the left.

### Out with the Old Way

Whereas it is clear that the big challenge was one of neoliberalism, the adamancy with which social democracy is ruled out by the Third Way is an intriguing one. How to explain the need to break away from the ideal of social democracy? Both Giddens and Blair never

rejected the social values of the left; on the contrary, they presented themselves as value-conservatives in many ways. The reasoning of each for challenging social democracy is somewhat different. Crucially, for both it is a matter of necessity, of changing conditions which force the transformation. For Giddens, it is rooted in political, economic and social processes. On the political level, the post-cold-war order, the prominence of regional and transnational bodies as well as the localization and fragmentation within countries entail a change from a nation-states world into an increasingly intertwined and multilevel public sphere. On the economic side, the information society has transformed the internal and international job market, witnessed the transition to shareholder economy and the service society following changes in the production relationships. On the social level, it is rather the transition to a postindustrial age, away from a class-based society, the emergence of the new middle classes and a vibrant civil society that make the difference. All these changes towards a post-scarcity risk society, triggered a need for a third way.<sup>20</sup> As for Blair, while accepting the contours of the global analysis the stakes were much more practical: the inelectability of the Labour party, since Thatcher came to power. The changing social strata within Britain, with the shrinking working class and the growing service economy necessitated a change of ideology in order for the party to be politically viable. Also, the identification of the welfare system with the needs of the poorer were seen as an impingement on the middle classes, presented the real partisan challenge to the British left: how to change the attitude towards the welfare state?

The setting that frames the quest for a third way in both cases is therefore different: Giddens writes against the background of neoliberal theory on the one end, and multiculturalism on the other. The one advocates pure economism, the other – pure culturalism. Giddens therefore asks what a political vision that is realistic about these global changes, yet normative and democratic in its core, may look like. For Blair, it is rather the ideological change which will shift the loyalties of potential voters and will allow the regeneration of the left in the UK that is at stake. How to revitalize – ‘modernize’ – the Labour ideology so that it could recapture the middle ground of the political spectrum (the median voter) and offer a viable political ideology in a skeptical age is his problem. Unsurprisingly, Giddens seeks a theoretical-cum-normative framework; Blair – an ideological-cum-political one. The answers of both are therefore different. They both start with sacrifices: Giddens disowns the welfare state; Blair discards of clause four.

### Civil Society I – Between State and the Market

In the third way account, the problem with producing a viable alternative to the global paradigm of neoliberalism is formidable not only due to its success as the new paradigm, but also because of the devastating effects it has had on social disintegration. One crucial element in the response is the restructuring of the public sphere. If the welfare state sought to cement state and economy, and neoliberalism demanded the relinquishing of state control over the market and a return to a minimal state, Third Way needed a third realm in order to enable a mobility out of the deadlock. It thus introduced civil society as an independent realm, along side economics and politics. Giddens argues: “(t)he fostering of an active civil society is a basic part of the politics of the third way... Civic decline is real and visible in many sectors of contemporary societies... It is seen in the weakening sense of solidarity in some local communities and urban neighborhoods, high levels of crime, and the break-up of marriages and families.”<sup>21</sup> In contrast to both the new right and left “We can’t blame the erosion of civility on the welfare state, or suppose that it can be reversed by leaving civil society to its own devices. Government can and must play a major part in renewing civic culture.”<sup>22</sup> This is the key to unlocking the Third Way rationale: the changing relationship between the state, the economy and civil society, given external pressures of a globalizing economy and internal pressures of social disintegration. A new balance of powers and a shift of responsibilities is therefore inevitable.

So how does Giddens see the role of civil society in responding to civic decline? As far as the dismantling of the welfare state is concerned, his agenda comes conspicuously close to that of the neoliberal view. It can be demonstrated in the cases of the breakdown of the family and crime prevention. Giddens argues: “Reform of the welfare state has already been mentioned... To take just one example, with changes in the nature of the family, single parents, particularly single mothers, have become much more numerous. Effective policies must be designed to cope with this change.”<sup>23</sup> What is a possible alternative policy, instead of having the burden of care on the welfare system? “Contractual commitment to a child could thus be separated from the marriage, and made by each parent as a binding matter of law, with unmarried and married fathers having the same rights and responsibilities.”<sup>24</sup> The care should be removed from the shoulders of the state and put on those of the individuals – and the voluntary associations of civil society. The same goes for care in old age: “Children should have responsibilities to their parents,

not just the other way round.”<sup>25</sup> In the case of crime, the Third Way suggests emphasizing the notion of crime prevention by putting the burden on the local communities themselves: “partnerships between government agencies, the criminal justice system, local associations and community organizations have to be inclusive – all economic and ethnic groups must be involved.”<sup>26</sup> Yet, much of the new role of civil society is portrayed in terms of charity organizations, local communities and social care: a clear shift from welfare to charity, from state to individual and voluntary associations is being indicated. Ultimately, perceiving the role of the government strictly as a coordinating entity, which shifts the burden to local associations, amounts to dismantling one crucial responsibility of the government to its citizens; this would inevitably create new inequalities between communities wealthy enough to invest in local policing and those who would have to rely on decreasing help from the state. Thus, as far as the welfare state is concerned, the third way program is emphasizing shifting responsibility from the state to civil society and giving a growing role to the markets in regenerating social provisions.

Insofar as the economic sphere is concerned, Blair follows Giddens’ footsteps in transforming the role of the state from owner and regulator to a guiding partner: “the role of Government becomes less about regulation than about equipping people for economic change.”<sup>27</sup> The role of the government becomes one of working together, of enabling and facilitating: “the purpose of economic intervention is not that Government can run industry, but that it should work with it so that industry is better able to run itself.”<sup>28</sup> New Labour accepts civil society as a mediating realm, to which some of the burden of the welfare-state is relegated. It emphasizes the new coordinative role of government. In terms of the welfare state, “(t)his is the third way: not laissez-faire nor state control and rigidity; but an active Government role linked to improving the employability of the workforce.”<sup>29</sup> However, what about the welfare state? Does New Labour follow the Third Way, abiding by the neoliberal agenda, emphasizing shifting responsibility from the state to the civil society? One difference surely is the targets of employment and the focus on work.

In terms of the restructuring of the public sphere, both Third Way and New Labour agree on the vital importance of civil society as forging a new partnership between state and the market, the public and private sectors. Nevertheless, the role of civil society vis-à-vis the economy is different from the perspective of political ideology vs. social theory. For Blair, civil society is crucial in striking a new deal between the private and the public sectors thereby redefining the project of the welfare state. Civil society enables the state to

through the initiative back into the invisible hands of the market. However, the new understanding of the welfare state is not in disowning the responsibility of the government to the economy – quite the contrary: the reactionary revolution of New Labour is in bringing back the all too familiar, yet allegedly unfeasible, idea of full employment. The welfare state is to shed its image of a safety net for the poor, the sick and the unemployed, generating a trap of people in the benefit system. The welfare state is refocused on work: “Employment is not just the foundation of affordable welfare, it is the best anti-poverty, anti-crime and pro-family policy yet invented. After years of mass unemployment, full employment is now on the agenda.”<sup>30</sup> It also set to target people in transition from one job to another, with retraining schemes and loans for educational training. The welfare state is refashioned to help the vast majority of the population: the middle classes in a rapidly changing information and service economy. New Labour did made a fantastic recovery from mass unemployment; only most of the new jobs were not directly connected to the high-tech market, nor even to the famous ‘flexibility’ – the ‘uniquely British’ ingredient, the secret weapon of transatlantic special relationships against the centralized economies of the continental countries – but in the public sector. If the new vision of the welfare state is the reactionary mission of full employment, most of which constituted on the boost in the public sector, is the new idea of civil society merely a rhetorical device? Is it old Labour in a new hat? Not necessarily: civil society and the private sector serve to boost the economy and bring in investment, attract foreign companies and enliven the market; the surplus generated by this booming market can then be redistributed back to the public sector and create better quality of life and more jobs. New Labour is not using fiscal policies to generate the resources for redistribution, but the independent engine of civil society and the market. The benefits of the prosperous market economy are then put into the public sector with the task of providing a ‘world class’ education so that Britain could compete in the global economy.

For Giddens, “(t)he ‘Keynesian welfare compromise’ has been largely dissolved in the West.”<sup>31</sup> Conceptually, he advocates a move from welfare state to a reformed welfare system and ‘a globalized universe of high reflexivity’.<sup>32</sup> But the bulk of his theory suggests his interest lies somewhere else: the “new mixed economy looks instead for a synergy between public and private sectors, utilizing the dynamism of markets but with the public interest in mind. It involves regulation and deregulation, on a transnational as well as national and local levels; and a balance between the economic and the non-economic in the life of the society.”<sup>33</sup> It is a plan for a reflexive state in a post-national era. The new

economic arrangements transcend national boundaries, and Giddens proposes standardized entrance requirements in companies across borders and even portable pension rights.<sup>34</sup> Governments thus should take an active role in legislating for such standardization, knowing that it might not be their own companies and work places that will benefit. Civil society – private and voluntary associations and companies – is not necessarily a national realm but a global civil society which connects local initiatives in international markets. Crucially, civil society helps in striking the balance between the economic and non-economic life: for Giddens, the prospect of full employment in advanced industrial societies is an unattainable task.<sup>35</sup> His social philosophy therefore prepares the way to go beyond work as the main definer and status provider in society, to self-realization and a place in the community as counting more. As far as civil society is concerned, “inclusion must stretch well beyond work, not only because there are many people at any one time not able to be in the labour force, but because society too dominated by the work ethics would be thoroughly unattractive place in which to live.”<sup>36</sup> Blair’s idea is to refurbish the welfare state by making it attractive to the middle classes, using the private sector to generate the extra-wealth to enable the public sector to flourish; Giddens’ theory leads from work-based national economy to lifeworld international society.

### Civil Society II – Community and Solidarity

As becomes apparent from Giddens’ analysis of advanced democratic societies, the renewal of social democracy means that the perception of personal self-realization moves away from job-for-life notion to one much more varied and dynamic social realm. The role of civil society transcends, therefore the economic function of relieving the welfare state from some of its responsibilities: “Government should contribute directly to the modernizing of civil society while maintaining its distance from it. Civic entrepreneurship is one quality of a modernized civil society. It is needed if civic groups are to generate creative and energetic strategies to help cope with social problems.”<sup>37</sup> Giddens’ main collective actors, key to the revival of civil society, are self-help, environmental and women’s movements, originating in the 1960s.<sup>38</sup> Importantly, the context in which they are discussed transcends the national realm: “Such movements and groups express, but also contribute to, the heightened reflexivity of local and global life today.”<sup>39</sup> The simultaneous localization and globalization of civic society is essential to the effort of democratizing democracy and enhancing the public dialogue on the common good. Indeed, many of the NGOs Giddens analyzes – such as Amnesty international and

Greenpeace – are active on the international stage and constitute part of the emerging global civil society. They are part of an alternative political order which he advocates.

For New Labour, civil society has quite a different role in the aftermath of harsh Tory market economy. For the extreme competitive individualism of the neoliberalism generates a vacuum in social cohesion. This is particularly so since the neoliberal policies of Thatcher deepened the gap and increased the levels of poverty and the underclass.<sup>40</sup> The outcome of neoliberalism – pure market economy – is a lack of social solidarity and trust. The alternative is the changing role of government and a new sense of community: “At the heart of my beliefs is the idea of community... I mean that our fulfillment as individuals lies in a decent society of others. My argument to you today is that the renewal of community is the answer to the challenge of a changing world.”<sup>41</sup> But what kind of community does he have in mind? This is where the second ascribed role of civil society comes into play: “We understand the benefits of open markets... But we believe also in an active civil society, founded on the basis of solidarity that provides a helping hand for people to realize their potential.”<sup>42</sup> At the centre of Blair’s politics are the concepts of community, solidarity, partnership and civil society. This is the moralism Blair brings into politics.

Note that the kind of associations in civil society Blair is talking about different than the NGOs Giddens had in mind. They are religious, ethnic and immigrant communities, the Black community and local communities. The 2001 manifesto claims: “Voluntary and community organizations are key to Labour’s vision for Britain. From large national charities to local community groups and faith-based institutions, these sectors are a vital and diverse part of national life.”<sup>43</sup> These kind of groups serve three interrelated goals in New Labour discourse: they appeal to vast social sectors which the left seeks their support in election; they go hand in hand with shifting the burden away from the welfare state: some of the responsibilities that the state have had for care, aid and a sense of belonging are delegated to civil society, and therefore these communities are encouraged to assume such duties; but it also generates a new attitude towards parts of the population which the work-centred ideology of old Labour excluded. If in the traditional framework individuals were part of the national community and the sense of community came from the workplace, and from the trade unions, Blair re-legitimizes other forms of community and attempts to strike a new balance: the state, for the first time, recognizes these communities and relegates power to them; these communities, in return, accept the legal framework of the state and help to cement a new solidarity

towards Britain. This is the politics of recognition: instead of a faceless state there is a sense of partnership and mutual interest. Civil society thus provides a public sphere which acknowledges and encourages local communities to enter a new partnership with the government.

### **Citizenship: New (National) Solidarity vs. Cosmopolitan Democracy**

Does the endorsement of diverse local communities, of the multifarious civic society imply a vision of multicultural international society, like that which the new left advocates? Not for Blair's New Labour. It is declaratively the 'One Nation, one Britain' party: "New Labour is the political arm of none other than the British people as a whole. Our values are the same".<sup>44</sup> Crucially, the project of social inclusion is devised to incorporate the disadvantaged and neglected groups of society – immigrants, women, ethnic communities – into the vision of the new Britain. It is not less of a struggle about the redefinition of what a people, a nation is. And it means, for the first time in leftist rhetoric, an unashamedly nationalism: "My vision of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is of a popular politics reconciling themes which in the past have wrongly been regarded as antagonistic – patriotism and internationalism; rights and responsibilities; the promotion of enterprise and the attack on poverty and discrimination."<sup>45</sup> The third role of civil society is precisely in enabling this new nationalism by recreating the concept of inclusive citizenship: "This is what I mean by equal worth – a one-nation society in which all citizens have the same rights and responsibilities."<sup>46</sup> For Blair, civil society is the prime tool for creating solidarity for 'one Britain':

The Third Way needs a concept of a modern civic society that is founded on opportunity and responsibility, rights and duties go together. Society has a duty to its citizens and its citizens have a duty for society... But – and here is the deal that is at the heart of a good, decent, modern civic society – in return for that opportunity we are entitled to demand a law-abiding behaviour... We believe, therefore, in this concept of strong, modern civic society and we can be equally fierce in our defense of racial and religious tolerance as in our attack on crime and social disintegration. What people are looking for today is a country free from prejudice but not free from rules. They want a strong society bound by strong rules. That society should be fair and it should give equality of opportunity that people need but it should also demand that responsibility back from them as citizens of that society.<sup>47</sup>

The make up of civil society is in the end of the day individuals, bearing rights and responsibilities. It is *civic* society, as its components are equal citizens, bounded by civil

laws and entitled to civil liberties. It is where racial and religious tolerance is being practiced, and also where social disintegration is being tackled. Civil society, the community of British citizens, a community of communities, is central for his polity. He seeks “to create a one-nation Britain where all share in our country’s prosperity, not only a privileged few.”<sup>48</sup>

Thus, with the discourse of community, solidarity and partnership comes the additional role of civil society for the New Labour. Civil society is fundamental in generating a new kind of solidarity with the nation state. With the agenda of transferring responsibility to voluntary associations, alternative sources of solidarity must be sought. Thus, in return for a greater role within the economy, social associations within civil society have a responsibility to generate solidarity beyond their individual missions towards the one nation state. Devolving power to local organizations, communities and associations – actors of civil society – must generate, in return, their capability to reinforce solidarity without homogenizing society. The social communities have a role to play in cementing the new national solidarity: “Our purpose is simple: to create a Britain that is democratic, decentralized and diverse, with decisions always taken as close to the people as is consistent with efficiency and equity.”<sup>49</sup> Blair opted for solidarity which redefined nationality through citizenship – citizens bonded up by civic laws, civic rights in civil society – sharing a project of a prosperous Britain.

Blair’s third way is situated between Old Labour and Neoliberal conservatism. The former was constituted upon a class-society, where the notions of community and belonging were concentrated around one’s class, trade union and workplace; political loyalty rested with the party of the working class and citizenship was embedded in social rights in the Marshall welfare state model. The Conservatives held extreme market individualism, with citizenship privatized to mean consumer rights within the market economy; the family, religion and tradition symbolized the national identity. New Labour, in contrast, developed a notion of social inclusion within diversified civil society where ethnic, religious, cultural and local communities provide a sense of belonging and in turn create national solidarity; government act in partnership with economic and civic voluntary and private organizations and citizenship is expressed in civic right and responsibilities. This is summarized in table 2.

**Table 2: Old Labour, Thatcherism and New Labour's ideas of Citizenship**

	<b>Old Labour</b>	<b>Thatcherite Conservatism</b>	<b>New Labour</b>
<b>Economy</b>	Welfare state	Market economy	Civil society, market + gov. in partnership
<b>Social Community</b>	Social class	Radical individualism + nationalism	Religious, ethnic + local communities
<b>Political loyalty</b>	Trade unions, Party	Political elites + national interest	Social inclusion; One nation, One Britain
<b>Citizenship</b>	Social rights	Consumer rights	Civic rights + responsibilities

What is new about New Labour? for one, the language.<sup>50</sup> Blair consistently reappropriates values, beliefs and concepts that used to be identified with the Tories, endow them with a new meaning and incorporate them into the ideology of the left. 'One Nation one Britain' is a clear example thereof. Against the individualist market economy Blair has a go at the nationalist discourse, usually identified with the conservatives, but incorporates into it the disadvantaged groups and minority communities which neither Tories of old Labour were identified with. The notion of civil society enables Blair to offer a new deal for the immigrant communities: solidarity for an extended notion of nationalism based on citizenship. Between the individual and the nation there is a place, a public space, for minorities; their communities are being recognized and endowed with rights and responsibilities; in return they provide solidarity with the state. Instead of social – that is economic – rights, as advocated by Marshall, citizenship rights are the key to enter the British nation. Citizenship is coextensive with national borders, but it transcends the purely political rights of voting, and overrides the economic rights, to include civil society and to extend to the individual – and the community's – responsibilities. The emphasis on opportunity and responsibilities, rights and duties enables Blair to present Labour as the party of law and order – tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime, expropriating the Tories from their traditional role, as is happening in the quest for more choice in schools: again, a neoliberal ideal which is served to transcend the dichotomy between private sector's choice and public sector's equality:

choice should be given within the schools of the public sector; no selection of students beyond locality and an ambition to make every British child part of a ‘world class’ student (thus changing the meaning of class from the old Labour terminology too). The new inclusivity is based on citizenship and locality – not on privilege or union membership. Thus, the role of civil society in third way thinking is to relieve the welfare state of the burden of social justice by ascribing a growing role to local communities and voluntary associations. In return for their greater role, the state expects these associations to play a part in forging a new solidarity towards the nation state, by allowing different levels of loyalties to be part and parcel of the nation-state, hence contributing to a growing decentralization of society. Citizenship remains a political concept, which derives its strength from an active civil society. This, in turn, generates a new source of national solidarity, which addresses the crisis of social disintegration, the Thatcher legacy.

How does Giddens’ theory perceive citizenship? For him, it is inextricably linked with the crisis of democracy: democracy – with no other viable alternatives or enemies – is not democratic enough.<sup>51</sup> “The democratizing of democracy first of all implies decentralization – but not as a one-way process. Globalization creates a strong impetus and logic to the downward devolution of power, but also to upward devolution.”<sup>52</sup> In order to make the world order more democratic, Giddens suggests to democratize the local level – complementing the electoral system with local direct democracy, electronic referenda, citizen’ juries and other experiments of direct democracy;<sup>53</sup> and advocates global governing institutions – beyond international and intergovernmental bodies, like the EU or UN, he proposes real global political governing mechanisms.<sup>54</sup> This is not utopian since national and global governance are already interconnected, and “(t)here already is global governance and there already is global civil society.”<sup>55</sup> There is little surprise, then, that Giddens’ revised notion of citizenship is one of global citizenship.<sup>56</sup> Where does this leave the nation state? On the face of it, Giddens’ theory agrees with Blair’s interpretation: “Government can act in partnership with agencies in civil society to foster community renewal and development... Third way politics is one-nation politics.”<sup>57</sup> For him too, there must be a dissociation of citizenship from social rights. This is connected to the ‘theorem that responsibilities go along with rights’ which “should be seen as a general principle of citizenship, by no means confined to the welfare area.”<sup>58</sup> On the national level, Giddens advocates a reflexive cosmopolitan nation, reconstructed national identity, arguing that the “cosmopolitan nation is an active

nation... Today, national identities must be sustained in a collaborative milieu, where they won't have the level of inclusiveness they once did, and where other loyalties exist alongside them."<sup>59</sup> The localization and globalization processes, which he defines as 'movement of double democratization' is said by Giddens to strengthen the nation-state as it becomes responsive to pressures. However, it is clear that in the least he has a vision of a multilayered identity, whereby national identity has no explicit priority, and a political vision of a multifaceted world, where local, national and regional and levels gradually give way to global governance, unified global institutions, which set the rules of the political game and practice some form of subsidiarity principle. Redistribution hence moves to a global scale, as well as decision making and economic transactions. This is summarized in Table 3. Whether the decentralization of democracy actually enhances democracy or dissolves it into unaccountable, contingent and easily manipulated set of alternative bodies and interest groups, is not discussed.

**Table 3: Giddens' theory of multilevel governance and global citizenship**

	<b>Economics</b>	<b>Civic Society</b>	<b>Politics</b>
<b>Personal level</b>	Consumer	Multifarious actor	Multilayered identity
<b>Communal level</b>	Local economies + initiatives	NGOs, voluntary associations and social movements	Local organizations (self-help, charity environmental groups)
<b>National level</b>	National regulation	Active civil society	A cosmopolitan state
<b>Regional level</b>	Regional trade agreements	European civic culture	European governance
<b>Global level</b>	Global market economy	International organizations	Global citizenship + global governance

### **Concluding discussion: Renewing 'Social Democracy': Two Third Ways**

The renewal of social democracy took different shapes at the writing desk of the theoretician and the corridors of powers where the PM resides; but it was as much about reconfiguring political concepts, as it was about changing policies.<sup>60</sup> They both justified the need for change in inevitable social and economic processes on a global scale; they both sought a way to preserve some of the old values of the left, to maintain some of the

economic achievements of the right, and to offer a new synthesis; they both had to redefine social democracy. Each conceptualized it differently. For Blair, the crucial thing was to reshape the political landscape and the ideological terrain. If in the Old Labour days Britain was a class-based society, and the social component of social democracy was all about social classes, defining citizenship on the basis of social rights within the welfare state, Tony Blair inherited from Thatcher a state where the vast majority of the population belongs to the middle-classes, and mechanisms of social solidarity are scarce in a competitive market economy. He re-interpreted 'social' to mean community, appealing to diverse groups in society: women, ethnic and immigrant minorities, the Black community and local communities, completely destroyed by the Tory years. 'Social' meant civil society, the public sphere where these groups and communities acquire citizenship rights and in return provide their duties: cementing a social solidarity to the state. The demos in 'Democracy' was redefined and applies to all citizens who became part of the 'one nation, one Britain' project. Citizenship was the other side of social inclusion bonded by civic laws, civic rights and responsibilities. In this type of social democracy, the social – civil society – had the function of 'politics of recognition' – recognizing and empowering minority groups and communities, but also establishing a new relationship between the government and the market, so that the latter is used to bring in prosperity which in turn enables redistribution of resources, and a new investment in the public sector – oriented to create jobs and change the idea of the welfare state from a safety net for the poorest of society to the working population at large.

For Giddens, social democracy was about something quite else. 'Social' stood for civic society, but this time for the global civil society, with its transnational organizations and international associations, complementing the global market economy. In political terms, 'democracy' was all about democratizing the local, regional and global levels, by encouraging mechanisms of direct democracy and social activism to the different levels and decentralizing the public institutions. Ultimately, global governance – a set of distinct global – not intergovernmental – institutions was designated as the next evolutionary stage of politics.

What is the relationship between these two Third Ways? One way to reconcile them is to argue that New Labour materialized on the national level Giddens' vision, making some progress on the local level, with the devolution of power, and some headways on the regional level, with the contribution of Blair to the constitution debate in the EU. This

is a plausible interpretation of the relationship. Yet, the ideological project of the two thinkers, remains quite distinct. Whereas New Labour remains, in its own way, loyal to the idea of the welfare state, and to work as the centre of human life in advanced industrial societies, Giddens' project holds that the welfare state cannot be maintained, and his social philosophy advocates a transformation from work-ethics to lifeworld as its centerpiece. Whereas New Labour's worldview is centered around the nation state as the analytical unit, where redistribution occurs, and policies are taking place, Giddens' political thought clearly conceives of a new world order, with global governing institutions, laws and regulations.

Finally, the relationships between the theoretician and the politician remain an enigma. Giddens publishes his *Third Way* after Blair has risen into power; they cite one another; Giddens even changed his ideas about full employment and education in view of New Labour's achievements. Could we not see Giddens' *Third Way*, and definitely his *Where Now for New Labour* as ideological, rather than theoretical works? May he be an ideologue, despite his academic profession and a social theorist? And how about Blair: cannot we characterize his original project of reconstructing Labour from the philosophical principles, to the rhetoric, to the policy and the politics as an ideological work? Furthermore, might we not say, after all, that he is a theoretician in his own right (or left), regardless of what one thinks of his theory? The lines between theory, ideology and politics are indeed fine lines, to be drawn in another occasion.

From Marshall's:

#### Third Way: Civic Rights for a Multiethnic State

The two alternatives so far analyzed – consumer rights in the neoliberal view, and cultural rights in the New Left vision – reshaped the ideological terrain in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is against this background that the traditional social democratic parties had to devise their own worldview. Some, like the Scandinavian parties, have clung to the welfare state agenda, with minor changes such as endorsing multiculturalism and carrying on economic reforms in coordination with the workers' unions and the employers. Others, however, rethought their position vis-à-vis the welfare state and citizenship, choosing to follow a Third Way between socialism and capitalism, the old welfare state and the neoliberal way. Following Giddens (1998) they identified the changes in the global economy, the rise of the new, educated middle-classes and the emergence of the knowledge society as processes that necessitate an ideological

transformation. Social democratic parties in Germany, Britain and Israel in the mid-1990s, for example, have all endorsed the slogan ‘education, education, education’ as their main campaign catchphrase, their leaders ran a personalized election campaigns, with Schroeder, Blair and Barak as the main figure head of their party, and they all changed their party’s name – from SPD to *Neue Mitte* (the New Center), from Labour to New Labour, and from Labour to Israel One, respectively.<sup>61</sup> The Blair/Schroeder declaration proclaimed: “Our national economies and global economic relationships have undergone profound change. New conditions and new realities call for a re-evaluation of old ideas and the development of new concepts... Our aim is to modernize the welfare-state, not dismantle it: to embark on new ways of expressing solidarity and responsibility to the other without basing the motivation for economic activity on pure, undiluted self-interest” (Blair/Schroeder, 2000:56). What, therefore, is their way of rethinking the welfare state and citizenship?

The first step has to do with redefining the ‘social’ component of social rights. In Marshall’s thesis, social class was definitely the prime category of analysis and the main cause for introducing the welfare state as the central locus of citizenship rights; social rights held society together through the social net which the state provided. However, in Tony Blair’s hundreds of speeches, as in New Labour’s manifestos, white and green policy papers, the word ‘social class’ hardly appears. Nonetheless, the term ‘social’ – albeit in a transformed form – is pivotal to Blair’s politics. The first notion of ‘social’ has to do with the Tory legacy: ‘the Conservatives have systematically divided our nation and eroded the social fabric that holds us together... For far from creating a classless society, the gap between classes has become a gulf.’ (Labour, 2001: 14). The individualism of the marketplace, which Blair does not offset, generates a vacuum of solidarity and trust; the alternative is the changing role of government and proposing a new sense of community: “At the heart of my beliefs is the idea of community... I mean that our fulfillment as individuals lies in a decent society of others. My argument to you today is that the renewal of community is the answer to the challenge of a changing world” (Blair, 2000). At the centre of Blair’s politics are the concepts of community, solidarity, partnership and civil society. This is the moralism Blair brings into politics. It also provides an alternative meaning to social politics – one which has to do with Blair’s major concept of ‘social inclusion’. Crucially, this changes the understanding of the public sphere, as was best expressed in the document published by the Home Office, titled *Active Citizenship, Strong Communities – Progressive Civil Renewal*:

A key reason for pursuing civil renewal is that local communities are just better at dealing with their own problems. They have the networks, the knowledge, the sense of what is actually possible, and the ability to make solutions stick. Of course, they cannot do it on their own, without both the resources and the power of government. The civil renewal agenda is about supporting interdependence and mutuality, not simply leaving individuals or communities to fend for themselves. We are talking here about building the capacity, the social assets, and the leadership which will enable communities to take advantage of both the targeted help which is available and broader economic and social improvements and investment (Blunkett, 2003).

In order to deal with social exclusion, and enable solidarity, social communities, local groups and ethnic minorities become crucial to New Labour's project. The 2001 manifesto claims: "Voluntary and community organizations are key to Labour's vision for Britain. From large national charities to local community groups and faith-based institutions, these sectors are a vital and diverse part of national life." (Labour, 2001:33). These kind of groups serve three interrelated goals in New Labour discourse: they appeal to vast social sectors which the left seeks their support in election; they go hand in hand with shifting the burden away from the welfare state: some of the responsibilities that the state have had for care, aid and a sense of belonging are delegated to civil society, and therefore these communities are encouraged to assume such duties; but it also generates a new attitude towards parts of the population which were excluded by old Labour. If in the traditional framework individuals were part of the national community and the sense of community came from the workplace and from the trade unions, Blair re-legitimizes other forms of community and attempts to strike a new balance: the state, for the first time, recognizes these communities and relegates power to them; these communities, in return, accept the legal framework of the state and help to cement a new solidarity towards Britain. This is a type of politics of recognition: instead of a faceless state civil society provides a public sphere which acknowledges and encourages local communities to enter a new partnership with the government. But New Labour does not go all the way with the New Left's agenda. In terms of the welfare state, "the role of Government becomes less about regulation than about equipping people for economic change... This is the third way: not laissez-faire nor state control and rigidity; but an active Government role linked to improving the employability of the workforce." (Blair, 1998). Blair follows here Giddens' footsteps in transforming the role of the state from owner and regulator to a guiding partner: 'the purpose of economic intervention is not that Government can run

industry, but that it should work with it so that industry is better able to run itself.” (Labour, 2001:10). The Third Way embodies both the new Left’s idea of cultural rights, and the neoliberal notion of the free market which has to relieve the burden off the welfare state.

Nevertheless, in contrast to neoliberal consumer-oriented civic society, and fragmented ethnic cultures advocated by the new left, for Blair civic society is the prime tool for creating solidarity for ‘one Britain’:

The Third Way needs a concept of a modern civic society that is founded on opportunity and responsibility, rights and duties go together. Society has a duty to its citizens and its citizens have a duty for society... But – and here is the deal that is at the heart of a good, decent, modern civic society – in return for that opportunity we are entitled to demand a law-abiding behaviour... We believe, therefore, in this concept of strong, modern civic society and we can be equally fierce in our defense of racial and religious tolerance as in our attack on crime and social disintegration. What people are looking for today is a country free from prejudice but not free from rules. They want a strong society bound by strong rules. That society should be fair and it should give equality of opportunity that people need but it should also demand that responsibility back from them as citizens of that society. (Blair, 1999 in Fairclough, 2000:38).

The make up of civic society is individuals, bearing rights and responsibilities. It is *civic* society, as its components are equal citizens, bounded by civic laws and entitled to civic liberties. It is where racial and religious tolerance is being practiced, and also where social disintegration is being tackled. Civic society – the community of British citizens, is central for his polity. He seeks “to create a one-nation Britain where all share in our country’s prosperity, not only a privileged few.” (Blair, 1998b).

Thus, with the discourse of community, solidarity and partnership comes the centrality of civil society for the New Labour. Civil society is fundamental in generating a new kind of solidarity with the nation state. With the agenda of transferring responsibility to voluntary associations, alternative sources of solidarity must be sought. Thus, in return for a greater role within the economy, social associations within civil society have a responsibility to generate solidarity beyond their individual missions towards the one nation state. Devolving power to local organizations, communities and associations – actors of civil society – must generate, in return, their capability to reinforce solidarity without homogenizing society. The social communities have a role to play in cementing the new national solidarity: “Our purpose is simple: to create a Britain

that is democratic, decentralized and diverse, with decisions always taken as close to the people as is consistent with efficiency and equity” (Labour, 2001:31). Blair opted for solidarity which redefined nationality through citizenship – citizens bonded up by civic laws, civic rights in civil society – sharing a project of a prosperous Britain.

In terms of citizenship, therefore, New Labour adopts the notion of civic rights, which go beyond the individual rights of 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, and beyond social rights in terms of welfare state provisions. It expands the notion of citizenship from rights to responsibilities. Rights are portrayed in what the government has to do for the citizen, and thereby the Tory discourse of consumer rights is enhanced: “Reform means redesigning public services around the consumer, giving people the services they today expect- services that put them first, that are prompt, convenient, responsive and of the highest quality” (Blair, 2003). Yet, responsibilities – as the counterpart of rights in what constitutes a citizen – first of all incorporate social groups and ethnic communities to have duties towards the state, and portray the citizen as an active citizen of civil society. Civil society is thus the society of the citizens – of all citizens, regardless of nationhood, color or economic condition. Citizenship is a vehicle to go beyond the welfare state into the re-incorporation of civil society and the free market in the overall picture of the public sphere, and to go beyond the homogenous nation-state vision of the 20<sup>th</sup> century into a more inclusive society which endorses its minorities by thinking through categories of civic virtues and social solidarity rather than through nationalism.

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36 Ibid. p. 110. For some reservations against his own withdrawal from full employment prospects, see Giddens, 2001:9 – even if full employment has become viable again – due to New Labour’s policies, it is a very different kind of employment, with women’s work and part-time jobs prominent in it.

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