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# **A Comparison of Two Different Post-democratic Theories**

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“This thesis is the result of my own work. Material from the published or unpublished work of others which is used in the thesis is credited to the author in question in the text.”

Signature : ..... Date : September 2014

Johanna Katharina Schenner

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## INTRODUCTION

Democracy is a form of government dating back to Greek Antiquity. The word democracy consists of the two following terms, *demos* meaning the people and *kratos* which translates as power. Most European democratic governments consolidated their democratic status in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century following World War II, although exceptions exist such as France with its first democratic attempt in 1789. Currently, 93 regimes qualify as democracy (Freedom House, 2013), even if the democratic commitment varies from country to country. Democracy is subject to various interpretations: some people acknowledge democracy to be a political ideal, for example Aristotle; other people see democracy as a public institution.

In the academic sphere, democracy remains a much discussed theory. This fact is due to the existence of a variety of democratic theories. Robert Dahl (1956) already highlighted the multiple existences of democratic theories, which nonetheless, appear to share one common point: democratic rule should not be subject to the rule of a few, but should reflect people's different opinions in the democratic governance. Moreover, it is supposed that rational capacities characterize the members of any political community in order to be able to assess the government's activity. For rational capacities to unfold, citizens of democratic governments have to enjoy some freedoms such as conscience, speech and assembly (Terchek and Conte, 2001).

A first distinction in democratic theory that can be made is a minimal and a maximal conception. The minimal conception represents the political sphere's detentions in the hands of a small delineated group of people while the maximal conception postulates the involvement of as many citizens as possible in the political decision-making process (Terchek and Conte, 2001). A minimal conception of democracy bears the risk of the government developing secret intentions while its officials begin to exhibit manipulative traits. Given that the political power runs the risk of remaining outside the public sphere and outside public policy, citizens are expected to become aloof from politics. This process results in the common good becoming phantasmal for the following reason: as public policies in particular and politics in general remain outside the sphere of citizens' sphere of decision making / influence, government officials exclusively decide about policies serving their interest (Terchek and Conte, 2001). By taking one's own profitable interest as guideline for public policies, the likelihood decreases for common goods to arise as in its nature they intend to



serve a community rather than an individual. It seems as democracy should be more inclusive in its character in terms of involving a greater quantity of people in its decision-making process while also enlarging its scope of democratic control. Risks born by the maximal conception of democracy revolve around the rule of a minority for example. It seems as if the maximal conception of democracy, nevertheless of its flaws, bears the highest level of democratic idealism as its goals centre on making public power subject to public approval as well as aiming at law to mirror public preferences (Terchek and Conte, 2001).

Another approach to democracy theories is judging them from a normative angle. Normative democratic theory aims at outlining the most morally desirable forms of democracy in which context at what time. As first example to illustrate the meaning of normative democratic theory serves Schumpeter's account on democracy: he (1956) declares the most desirable form of democracy to be a formal version in which members of competing elites can be elected by the citizenry. Schumpeter sees equality in democratic regimes as a likely carrier of danger. On the contrary, Rousseau (1762) argues that formal democratic regimes are in line with slavery lacking political legitimacy which is not the case for egalitarian democracies.

The question which kind of democracy is morally more desirable in a given time and space links directly to issues surrounding democratic citizenship. This link raises the question whether ordinary citizens can, or not, rule over a given society (Christiano, 2006). Elite theorists hold the view that a high level of citizens' participation in elections generally leads to poor legislation reflecting citizens' ignorance and feelings. As such, these theorists welcome citizens' political apathy in order to avoid the before mentioned outcome. Schumpeter (1956) represents the elitist view on democracy by stressing the importance of political leadership which should avoid by any means emotionally and disputatious topics for instead enacting law and making political decisions. Although citizens play a significant role in electing a government, Schumpeter (1956) thinks that political repercussions are only experienced by the citizenry to a minor degree due to the citizens' lack of knowledge. Nonetheless, some persons believe that this form of democracy combined with democratic citizenship protects society from poorly performing, or corrupt, politicians.

Dahl's (1959) pluralist account of interest groups both attempts to tackle the problem posed by democratic citizenship and opposes the elitist view by declaring that "In a rough sense, the essence of all competitive politics is bribery of the electorate by politicians... The farmer... supports a candidate committed to high price supports, the businessman... supports

an advocate of low corporation taxes... the consumer... votes for candidates opposed to a sale tax” (Dahl 1959, p. 69). In the light of each citizen belonging to a different interest group, the elitist argument of poorly informed citizens does not hold true given that according to Dahl’s account citizens feature particular interest emanating from their lives. As such, democracy does not count as rule of a particular minority, but as a combination of different minor interests. The interest group’s bargaining settles discussions on laws and policies. In comparison to the elitist democratic perspective, Dahl’s angle comes close to ideal of egalitarian democracy (Christiano, 2006).

The last approach resulting from the problem of citizenship turns out to be the most significant for this thesis. Buchanan and Tullock (1965), both public choice theorists, established the neo-liberal theory of democracy. Neo-liberal democratic theorists dismiss both elitist’s and group pluralist approaches respectively for the following reasons: first, elitist approaches to democracy are likely to end in the elite using government and policy facilities for their own ends representing a disadvantage for the general public. This scenario has to be avoided, wherewith Buchanan and Tullock (1965) argue for limiting the elite’s power. Second, Buchanan and Tullock (1965) claim that Dahl’s emphasis on citizens’ participation as interest group is mistaken given that the problem of participation affects both interest groups in particular and the citizenry in general. Therefore, interest groups do not emerge as easily as anticipated while those characterized by strong economic interest are supposedly better in conveying their cause to the government. In short, only a delineated group of interest is likely to influence government policies. Again, these interest groups collaborate with the ruling elite resulting in an inefficient government while attempting to further their interest, the costs are born by others. This is the reason why policies then are expected to be more costly due to their imposition onto the whole citizenry although these policies are exclusively beneficial to this economic group of interest and to the ruling elite.

The reason for outlining the different approaches to democracy relates to introduce the topic of my thesis: post-democracy. In my thesis I approach democracy by investigating the state of 20th century democracy according to two different perspectives: one blaming the international economy hollowing out domestic politics, while the other one blames left ideology and politics for the post-democratic times we supposedly live in.

The term post-democracy has first been coined by Colin Crouch in 2004. His book bearing the same name is an extended sequel to the predecessor entitled *Coping with Post-Democracy* published by the Fabian Society in 2000. The sequel in turn has a successor, *The*

*strange non-death of Neo-liberalism* dealing with the continual perpetration of neo-liberal ideology, even in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis demonstrating the sheer consequences of unlimited financial capitalism. For Crouch, post-democracy amounts to the infiltration of the firm into the government. By this infiltration, the government is little by little hollowed out and becomes the firm's lackey. Therefore, politics lose their content while economic interests fill in the void bearing important repercussions for the citizenry such as a decreased say in governance.

To amplify the discussion on post-democracy and prove its relevance, Matthieu Baumier's (2007) post-democratic scenario is depicted in the following section. Similar as Crouch, Baumier (2007) dismisses the progressive and unilinear myths of democracy and intends to reveal its intrinsic disagreements. Baumier starts by evoking principles enounced for the first time by the political philosopher A. Tocqueville, such as equality's and liberty's significance for a regime for contrasting it with current dominant characteristics such as individuality and oligarchy. Moreover, Baumier also defines the prefix 'post' not as an alteration of democracy beyond itself but within its own scope. The advent of neo-liberal market capitalism from the 1970s onwards saw the rise in tension of both equality and liberty. Referring to the historian Aron, Baumier (2007, cited in Pabst, 2010) notices the constraining aspects of a unique definition of the term 'liberty' given rise to two different highly paradoxical situations: on the one hand, it can be at the origin of legitimating oppression under democratic provision; on the other hand it can pave the way for oppressive liberation overlooking the dearth of liberty for a specific segment of society. Baumier (2007, cited in Pabst 2010) carries on by stating that society neither can be regarded as good nor free but as servile and inquires by the same token which other tension could be used as the basis for democracy instead of the perceived uneasiness between equality and liberty. Baumier's analysis exhibits strong parallels between post-democracy in general and totalitarian democracy in particular. Therefore, inquiring whether post-democracy is not another denomination of this particular kind of democracy is important as well as accounting for the process of de-democratization.

Two other rival theories of post-democracy have respectively been developed by Sheldon Wolin (2008) and Jacques Rancière (1998). Wolin declares the compatibility between ever globally expanding democratic regimes with a significant dearth in popular participation. This situation further worsens considering that the increasing monopoly of power enjoyed by a small delineated group of new classes as well as old elites which favour

corporate business' interests equalling to a lack in creating and enforcing public goods. This last point is well depicted by "the political coming of age of corporate power and the political demobilization of the citizenry" (Wolin, 2008, cited in Pabst, 2010) contributing to the reversing of democracy paving the way for 'inverted totalitarianism'.

Rancière in turn acknowledges the existence of post-democracy as an absolute consensus democracy, "a political idyll of achieving the common good by an enlightened government of elites buoyed by the confidence of the masses" (Rancière, 1998, p. 93) and maintains the notion of the 'political' lying at its heart demonstrating strong ties with the concepts of identification and subjectivization. First, Rancière defines the political as "the encounter between two heterogeneous processes. The first process is that of governing, and it entails creating community consent, which relies on the distribution of shares and the hierarchy of places and functions. I shall call this process policy." (Rancière, 1992, p.58).

A critic of Crouch's post-democracy can be found in Welch's (2013) *Hyperdemocracy*. For Crouch (2004) post-democracy amounts to the hollowing out of the state by the global firm, which Crouch applies to European countries such as the United Kingdom and Italy. Welch defines hyperdemocracy as "...not just democracy, or an excess of democracy; it is the phenomenon of democracy undermining itself. It arises from the conditions all democrats [...] would approve of- the freedom to think, to challenge, and to ask the person who pretends to be an authority, "who are you to say?." (2013, p.xi). Another way to describe hyperdemocracy is "the problem of a democratic threat to democratic decidability [...]. It is a problem that, once it is picked out, begins to show itself widely." (Welch, 2013, p.xi/xii). The term hyperdemocracy has been coined by José Ortega y Gasset (1993). Ortega y Gasset described by the term the condition in which "the mass [of people] acts directly, outside the law, imposing its aspirations and its desires by means of material pressure." (Ortega y Gasset, 1993, cited in Welch, 2013, p.1).

The criticism by Welch with respect to Crouch's post-democracy centres on Crouch's lack of discussing how democratic means can bring to a halt and reverse the deterioration of democracy. Moreover, Welch claims that "Crouch's theory of post-democracy fails to grasp the full magnitude of the problem" (Welch, 2013, p.90). Welch discerns the problem of Crouch's analysis as: "If the root of the problem lies with capital, and if capital has learnt to fend off the democratizing pressures it faced at mid-century, only the revolutionary overthrow of the capital would seem to be a viable solution. Crouch seems to entertain the idea that better political leaders might not have entered into such close relationships with the

corporate world, and might, if in the future they made better choices, tap into the “potential radical and democratic agenda,” [...]” (Welch, 2013, p.90). Welch finally notes that “Crouch touches on a possible hyperdemocratic diagnosis of the problem when he says that “we have gone beyond the idea of rule by the people to challenge the idea of rule at all,”[...] The thesis of hyperdemocracy also funds this regrettable, on the basis that democracy is a form of rule. But in contrast to Crouch, the thesis makes that regrettable condition central to its analysis [...]” (Welch, 2013, p.93).

I support Crouch’s view because of my political convictions and my shared opinion with respect to politics, economics and the repercussions ensuing from the political-economic scenario we live in. Repercussions stretch from citizens’ silence to politics being a delineated area of action of the elite among others. I am not positive that Crouch’s post-democracy and Welch’s hyperdemocracy can be compared to another given that Crouch’s theory is written from a political and economic inception while Welch combines psychology and democratic theory.

This thesis will analyze Crouch’s and Baumier’s post-democratic theories. The reason for using Baumier’s writing is to oppose a French conservative (Baumier) view on post-democracy to a British socialist perspective (Crouch) due to their contrast. The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter one and two deal with Crouch’s post-democratic scenario and actors, while chapter three outlines Baumier’s conception of post-democracy. The aim of the thesis is to oppose two different political opinions of post-democracy. The novelty of the thesis lies in introducing M. Baumier’s theory of post-democracy to the English speaking world. Baumier’s book entitled *The totalitarian democracy, Conceptualizing the post-democratic modernity* is exclusively available in French and has so far not been translated into English.

## CHAPTER 1: CROUCH'S POST-DEMOCRATIC STATE

In order to nail down the meaning behind Crouch's theory of post-democracy, the different constituent elements intrinsic to his conception first have to be exposed. These elements stretch from observations made about society such as the indifference and apathy of citizens in a post-democratic setting, to the economic takeover of politics which then turns into a spectacle that no longer exhibits any political programme worth implementing. Crouch's theory of post-democracy not only applies to the political sphere, but also draws on aspects from other domains such as sociology and media studies in order to support his theory. Throughout the book no quantitative evidence is provided or other proof, such as examples of laws and studies, suggesting the validity of Crouch's depiction. The reader is left with a purely qualitative account of post-democracy that touches upon different concepts and theories. These concepts and theories (such as those concerning sound bites and Neo-liberalism) are explained by Crouch even if he does not extensively make reference to other scholars' work. Crouch seems to presuppose knowledge and interest from his readership in the field of democracy, economics and sociology. The dearth of references renders the text less academic than standard academic books and articles. This does, however, make the book accessible for a readership outside academia.

This chapter is divided into two different parts: first, Crouch's account of post-democracy is explained. As noted before, different domains are interrelated. At the beginning, several moments depicting post-democracy are listed before moving on to Crouch's discussion of the spectacular character of elections and Left politics in particular. The post-democratic development of Left politics is then situated and analyzed within a broader political-economic context making references to both new and old public policies. Following this political section, the next section deals with sociological and media related aspects of post-democracy: sound bites, political communication and the demise of quality journalism. With citizens blinded by politicians' self-staging, the elite acts as it wants to for example in cutting back on citizens' rights. This cutting back in civil rights and the stress on negative citizens' rights, such as the right to property, is also reflected in the move from 'old' institutionalism to a 'newer' version. This 'newer' version turns out to be indebted to models of firm organization. The second part of this chapter deals with Crouch's implicit understanding of democracy and the time of its most developed embedding, that is to say during the height of public management in the 1960s. This then leads to a discussion as to

whether this particular political-economic order could have been sustained or not by evaluating its limits. By investigating Keynesian demand management, which is a form of corporatism, it turns out that Keynesian public demand management also had characteristics that could alienate the citizenry from politics. In order to verify this statement, the relationship between Keynesian demand management, corporatism and bureaucracy is outlined. Moreover, Keynes, the founding father of the public management, is shown to be less of a socialist than some anticipated, which also becomes subject of debate later in this chapter. Finally, the relevance of Keynesianism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is explained even at the seemingly high tide of Neo-liberalism.

## **1.1 POST-DEMOCRACY ACCORDING TO CROUCH**

Colin Crouch identifies the post-democratic state as a “...situation[s] where boredom, frustration and disillusion have settled in after a democratic moment; when powerful minority interests have become far more active than the mass of ordinary people in making the political system work for them; where political elites have learned to manage and manipulate popular demands; where people have to be persuaded to vote by top-down publicity campaigns.” (Crouch, 2004, p. 20). This situation features a wide range of different characteristics, stretching from the dominance of economics over politics to social policy that in one way or the other had a negative effect on the British welfare state by reducing its size: “But, while being part of the debate over the future of the welfare state, these issues were also relevant to discussions of problems of democracy. The rising political importance of the global firm, the vacuum left by the decline of the working class, and the way in which a new political class of political advisers and business lobbyists was filling that vacuum all helped explain why the government social policy was becoming increasingly obsessed with giving work to private contractors. This debate was also part of the post-democratic debate, and in fact provided a major example of the practical consequences of post-democracy.” (Crouch, 2004, p. x). Regarding the basic features of post-democracy, Crouch outlines elements from both pre- and democratic times: “We should also expect the removal of some fundamental supports of democracy and therefore a parabolic return to some characteristics of pre-democracy. The globalization of business interests and fragmentation of the rest of the population does this, shifting political advantage away from those seeking to reduce inequalities of wealth and power in favour of those wishing to return them to levels of the pre-democratic past. Some of the substantive consequences of this can already be seen in

many countries. The welfare state gradually becomes residualized as something for the deserving poor rather than a range of universal rights of citizenship...At least in western societies, unregulated private power was as much a feature of pre-democratic societies as unregulated state power” (Crouch, 2004, p. 22/3). Post-democracy seeks to highlight a tension in reality.

**a) Post-democracy’s Spectacular Character: Elections in General, Politicians in Particular**

Crouch sees post-democracy as a particular state of affairs in which “elections certainly exist and can change governments, [but where] public electoral debate is a tightly controlled spectacle, managed by rival teams of professional experts in the techniques of persuasion, and considering a small range of issues selected by those teams.” (Crouch, 2004, p. 4).

This ‘managed’ character of post-democracy also articulates itself in the controlling of public election campaigns, voiding them of any sense and reinforcing their theatrical character under the supervision of so-called ‘spin doctors’. Neither authentic political agenda nor co-operation can emerge giving way to a high degree of politicians’ personalization reminiscent of the personality cults practiced by people such as Stalin or Mussolini. Citizens adopt a passive, apathetic and intimidated attitude wherewith attempts to form associations fall short. “The mass of citizens plays a passive, quiescent, even apathetic part, responding only to the signals given them” (Crouch, 2004, p. 4). The restricted political arena becomes the new playground of the political process where only the government and the elite, synonym for economic actors’ interests, delineate political matters. “Behind this spectacle of the electoral game, politics is really shaped in private by interaction between elected governments and elites that overwhelmingly represent business interests.” (Crouch, 2004, p. 4). Crouch’s main preoccupations revolve around the following scenario: “Under the conditions of a post-democracy that increasingly cedes power to business lobbies, there is little hope for an agenda of strong egalitarian policies for the redistribution of power and wealth, or for the restraint of power interests” (2004, p. 4). This situation would mostly affect left political parties’ legitimacy regarding their future existence as a Left party “will be experiencing a transformation that seems to reverse most of its achievements during the twentieth century.” (2004, p. 4).



Chapter two deals with the fate of political parties, in particular the British Left, under post-democracy. Nevertheless, it is important to note here that the transformation undergone by the political Left evidences the parabolic character of both democracy and the working class. First, regarding democracy Crouch outlines its shape by stating that: "...democracy has moved in a parabola. [...] The parabola can be seen most clearly in the British case, and perhaps also that of Australia: the rise of working-class political power there was gradual and extensive; its decline has been particularly steep" (Crouch, 2004, p. 5). The parabola of democracy can be understood as the intensity of democracy undergoing varying degrees, while in contrast the working-class politics parabola serves as analysis in terms of disappearance: "I [Crouch] had in mind that how, during the course of the twentieth century, that class moved from being a weak, excluded, but increasingly numerous and strong force banging on the door of political life; through having its brief moment at the centre, in the period of the welfare state, Keynesian demand management and institutionalized industrial relations; to end as a numerically declining and increasingly disorganized grouping being marginalized within that life as the achievements of the mid-century were booted out after it." (Crouch, 2004, p. 5). Following this quotation, it appears as if the degree/level of democracy and the existence of a working class were closely linked together with the former being dependent on the later. The high tide of Crouch's perceived democracy coincided with Keynesianism, a time when the democratic and working class parabola still exhibited strong upward tendencies towards more egalitarian politics and support for democratic participation.

Crouch situates the moment of democracy's highest point within the same period of time as when Keynesian policies led the economy. He states that "in most of Western Europe and North America we had our democratic moment around the mid-point of the twentieth century: slightly before the Second World War in North America and Scandinavia; soon after it for many others. [...] political change moved in tandem with major economic development which made possible the realization of many democratic goals. For the first time in the history of capitalism, the general health of the economy was seen as depending on the prosperity of the mass of wage-earning people. This was clearly expressed in the economic policies associated with Keynesianism, but also in the logic of the cycle of mass production and mass consumption embodied in so-called 'Fordist' production methods." (Crouch, 2004, p. 7).

Bearing in mind the broader context in which Keynesianism was embedded, that is to say a liberal and open trade system advocated by the United States of America, countries

which adhered to these economic structures experienced “a certain social compromise [...] between capitalist business interests and working people. In exchange for the survival of the capitalist system and the general quietening of protests against the inequalities it produced, business interests learned to accept certain limitations on their capacity to use their power. And democratic political capacity concentrated at the level of the nation state was able to guarantee those limitations, as firms were largely subordinate to the authority of national states. This pattern of development was seen in its purest form in Scandinavia, the Netherlands and the UK” (Crouch, 2004, p. 7/8). However, with the oil crises in the 1970s, “the global deregulation of financial markets had shifted the emphasis of economic dynamism away from mass consumption, and on to stock exchanges. First in the USA and the UK, but soon spreading in eager imitation, the maximization of shareholder value became the main indicator of economic success” (Dore, 2000, cited in Crouch, 2004, p. 10).

Keynesianism turns out to be as central to Crouch’s conception of democracy as Monetarism and subsequent Neo-liberalism is for Crouch’s post-democratic state analysis. Indeed, the Keynesian state seems to be in Crouch’s view at the centre of egalitarian and social policies during the era of public management, so that the decline of such management means that “politics and government are increasingly slipping back into the control of privileged elites in the manner characteristic of pre-democratic times; and that one major consequence of this process is the growing impotence of egalitarian causes” (Crouch, 2004, p. 6). The Keynesian era also witnessed the spread of socialist governments throughout the Western world; for instance, B. Kreisky’s government lasting from 1970 until 1983 in Austria, as well as W. Brandt’s government lasting from 1969 until 1974 in Western Germany.

Crouch blames, among other factors, the demise of Keynesianism and its replacement by Monetarism/Neo-liberalism for the emergence of post-democracy. In fact, the state as well as the British political Left reflects to a great degree the tensions of this alteration. However, this implicit suggestion regarding the social superiority of Keynesianism has to be assessed not in terms of the quality of its egalitarian outcomes, but on whether this economic regime could have been sustained after the 1973 oil crisis and subsequent related events such as the coming to power of conservative governments, the American stock market crash and the rise of Neo-liberalism.

*i) Personalization of Politics*

The revival of personalization in politics is said to date back to the era of M. Thatcher and R. Reagan, both charismatic and strong politicians whose popularity outshone their respective party's existence (McAllistar, 2005, p. 1). Nonetheless, other sources point to the Canadian 1968 Prime Minister P. Trudeau as the origin of post-World War Two personalization with his phenomenon of 'Trudeaumania'. This phenomenon is described as an excessive enthusiasm for the Canadian politician Pierre Trudeau from the late 1960s. In general, it is assumed that the personalization of politics limits itself to presidential systems featuring a strong president. The president embodies both functions of head of government and head of the state. J. Linz (1990, p. 52) claims that this particular regime type is prone to failure due to the lack of clear power separations.

The traditional environment of personalized politics in presidential regimes has expanded to different political systems such as parliamentary democracies. The attention brought to politicians in parliamentary systems much expanded during the last three decades leading to the following expressions: 'presidentialization of politics' even within the parliamentary system (Mughan, 1993; Poguntke and Webb, 2005, cited in McAllistar, 2005, p. 1), 'presidential parliamentarism' (Hazan, 1996, cited in McAllistar, 2005, p. 1) and 'institutional presidentialization' (Maddens and Fiers, 2004, cited in McAllistar, 2005, p. 1). These various denominations suggest that the functioning of democracy undergoes alteration while the formal and institutional characteristics remain in place.

The significance of electoral appeal studies came about when academic research acknowledged the important dimension of voter information gathering with respect to political candidates, in both their private and public lives, in order to decide whether or not to support the candidate. Surveys regarding American presidential candidates indicate that qualities such as reliability, competence and integrity gradually gained in importance whereas "the overall basic structure employed in candidate appraisals" (Miller et al's, 1986, cited in McAllistar, 2005, p. 2) persisted. These statements apply to presidential systems. Bean (1993, p. 129, cited in McAllistar, 2005, p. 3) declares that the same statements hold true for parliamentary systems by giving the examples of New Zealand and Australia. In fact, in parliamentary systems, political parties play a greater role in the political sphere/life, their leaders are more prone to be judged upon their apolitical and personal traits.

The spectacular features of politicians reinforced themselves with the development of the American advertising industry, which "began to develop its skills, with a particular boost coming from the development of commercial television. The persuasion business was born as

a profession [...], but politics and other users of persuasion tagged along eagerly behind, [...] making themselves as analogous as possible to the business of selling products so that they could reap maximum advantage from the new techniques” (Crouch, 2004, p. 25). The persuasion mentality and technique resulted in the people “hav[ing] become so accustomed to this that we take it for granted that a party’s programme is a ‘product’, and that politicians try to ‘market’ us their message” (2004, p. 25). The transformation of citizens into consumers will be discussed below.

A further development of the corrosion of political communication is the increasing personalization of electoral politics. Crouch sees this development with apprehension and draws parallels with totalitarian regimes: “Totally personality-based election campaigning used to be characteristic of dictatorships and of electoral politics in societies with weakly developed systems of parties and debate. [...] Promotion of the claimed charismatic qualities of a party leader, and pictures and film footage of his or her person striking appropriate poses, increasingly take the place of debate over issues and conflicting interests” (2004, p. 26). Examples of the following politicians are provided: first, the former centre-right Italian Prime Minister S. Berlusconi with his juvenescent pictures; second, the former Republican Governor of California, A. Schwarzenegger who owes his election victory to his Hollywood fame; third, and the Dutch right wing politician P. Fortuyn (2004, p. 26/7).

For the purpose of this thesis, the personalization of politics will be used for testifying an additional trait of post-democracy: political communication depicted by entertainment television programmes, also labelled as ‘paparazzi democracy’ (Cosentino, 2011). With the ascension of Berlusconi, an on-going media tycoon, political matters and television entertainment converged bringing about a new paradigm with important ramifications for Italian democracy (Abruzzese, 1994; Musso, 1994; Statera, 1994; Padovani, 2005 cited in Consentino, 2011, p. 3). These repercussions announce a new democratic paradigm in the Italian context: ‘the Paparazzi Democracy’. This paradigm refers to the intrusive attention brought by entertainment television programmes to closed information bearing significant political results (Consentino, 2011, p. 14). One of the outcomes is the gradual blurring of the distinction between private and public spheres contributing to television entertainment programmes’ and political communication’s merger. This coming together became distorting for conveying political content and information. Therefore, Crouch’s post-democratic scenario in Italy holds true not solely because of Berlusconi political and economic affiliation, but also due to his political party which reflects the tensions arising from this

mismatch of politics and economics. In fact, most members of Forza Italia, Berlusconi's political party, originate from the economy and even assumed minister posts without any former political education.

ii) *Decline in the Quality of Political Communication*

Regarding political communication Crouch states that “we have become accustomed to hear politicians not speaking like normal people, but presenting glib and finely honed statements which have a character all of their own. We call these ‘sound bites’...” (2004, p. 24). With these changes in political communication, the voidance of content only turned out to be a question of time. Crouch further notes the changing style of journalism: “Popular journalism, like politics, began to model itself on advertising copy; very brief messages requiring extremely low concentration spans...” (2004, p. 26) while the writing style of official documents also underwent a devaluation “...mass-circulation newspaper discussion, government material aimed at the mass public, and party manifestos are totally different. They rarely aspire to any complexity of language or argument” (2004, p. 24).

The semantic changes in policy-reports and related government documents also have to be evaluated from a different perspective. The trivialization of semantics used in official documents carries a positive effect regarding their accessibility: in fact, by using a simplified diction, these official documents also become available to segments of society that remain detached from secondary as well as higher education.

**b) The Sociology of Media: Habermas (1991) and Debord (1967) Accounts on Spectacular Media**

Jürgen Habermas’ doctoral thesis entitled *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1991 date of the English publication; originally published in 1962) relates to the discussion on post-democracy in general, and post-democratic media in particular, by offering insights into debates surrounding the public spheres. How these debates are relevant to contemporary societies, and to post-democracy in particular, will be explained at the end of this section. Habermas (1991) claimed a bourgeois public sphere arose during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries public sphere, individuals would meet up in order to discuss politics as well as the powers of state. In Habermas’ conception (1991), this bourgeois space emerged as an antipode to despotism. With the advent of the industrial revolution and capitalism, institutions different from the private economy and state politics emerged that served the bourgeoisie as places of intellectual exchange. These institutions came in different forms such as debating societies, newspapers as well as coffee houses. Habermas himself rightly points out that the public sphere was delineated and therefore not accessible to anyone. In fact, in order to gain access to the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century public

sphere, one had to be literate and belong to the property owning class. Habermas (1991) further states that the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere occurred simultaneously with the distinction between the private and public spheres, known as the institutionalization of privateness. The crucial transformation was that the bourgeoisie became privately wealthy, state dominant and hence its media became consumer orientated.

This 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century public sphere soon declined. Phenomena such as industrialization, increases in literacy and popular press as well as social developments all contributed to the public sphere's demise. Dahlgren (1995) concludes that the decline of the public sphere led to "a blurring of the distinction between public and private in political and economic affairs, a rationalization and shrinking of the private intimate sphere (family life) and the gradual shift from an (albeit limited) public of political and cultural debates to a public of mass consumers." (Dahlgren, 1994, p. 4). Consumption and mass media debates replaced the public sphere characterized by rational-critical debates. In Habermas' view, the public sphere continued to exist, however as a sheer shadow of itself and exclusively as an appearance.

The emergence of the welfare state counts as another milestone in the public sphere's transformation (Habermas, 1991). In the heyday of public demand management that also saw the emergence of the welfare state, newspaper / media reached a new record high in terms of quantity. The new record high of mass media turned to be the new basis of public opinion, replacing the public sphere as domain of public opinion. Habermas further states that with the advent of mass media, the public sphere transformed into an advertisement platform while media turned into trade. The new public sphere has two key processes at its heart: first, the encroachment of legitimate power by communicative tools; and, second, the usage of mass media in order to foster mass loyalty, consumer demand beside compliance with the newly public sphere (1993, p. 452).

Habermas suggests using a discourse-centred theory of democracy in order to avoid the before mentioned pitfalls. In this theory, decisions would be "rationally motivated but fallible result of a discussion concerning the judicious resolution of a problem, a discussion that has come temporarily to a close because coming to a decision could no longer be postponed (Habermas, 1993, p. 450).

Habermas (1991) notes like Crouch (2004) that the media no longer aim at representing reality, but actually turn citizens into consumers. Habermas declares that

“instead of doing justice to reality, [journalism] has a tendency to present a substitute more palatable for consumption and more likely to give rise to an impersonal indulgence in stimulating relaxation than to a public use of reason.” (1991, p. 170). The advent of radio and television in the 1930s and 1950s, was another milestone in the deterioration of the then (pseudo) public sphere: “In comparison with printed communications the programs sent by the new media [radio and television] curtail the reactions of their recipients in a peculiar way. They draw the eyes and ears of the public under their spell but [...] place it under “tutelage” which is to say they deprive it of the opportunity to say something and to disagree” (1991, p. 170). In sum, Habermas views publicist institution to be at the mercy of media that is characterized by high economic concentration as well as by technological-organization. In fact, the former liberal public sphere is reversed.

Habermas’ account does not go without criticism. The three main points of criticism are: first, the dearth in a gendered approach to the (liberal or pseudo) public spheres (Jameson, 1993, cited in Robbins, 1993; Polan, 1993, cited in Robbins, 1993); second, the dearth in discussing alternative forms of public sphere than the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century bourgeois liberal one (Fraser, 1993; cited in Robbins, 1993); and, third, in academic scholarship Habermas’ claim of a public sphere remains debated as it is questionable whether a public and a single public sphere ever existed (Robbins, 1993).

Debord’s (1967) *The Society of Spectacle* echoes Habermas’ claim that social life has been replaced by its sheer representation. Debord defines as spectacle “[the] concrete inversion of life, and, as such, the autonomous movement of nonlife.” (1967, p. 5). He further states that “The spectacle appears at once as society itself, as a part of society and as a means of unification. As a part of society, it is that sector where all attention, all consciousness, converges.” (1967, p. 5). Debord attributes to the media the role of sustaining the society of spectacle “If the spectacle understood in the limited sense of those “mass media” that are its most stultifying superficial manifestation seems at times to be invading society in the shape of a mere apparatus, it should be remembered that this apparatus has nothing neutral about it, and that it answers precisely to the needs of the spectacle’s internal dynamics.” (1967, p. 24). By falling prey to the images circulated by the media, the society no longer relates to its historic trajectory / past (Bunyard, 2011), but to the images circulated by mass media at the command of those that ran the spectacle.



Both Habermas' (1991) and Debord's (1967) accounts address the spectacular character of society at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their accounts situate the decay of the public sphere within the context of mass media development. As such, they coincide with Crouch's (2004) analysis of mass media's contribution to poor quality journalism, politicians' frequent use of sound bites, the advent of the citizen-consumer and politics exclusive character by being accessible only to a delineated group of people. Nonetheless, Habermas' (1991) and Debord's (1967) analyses locates the decline of public / political life much earlier than Crouch's *Post-democracy*. The problem is that Habermas (1991) and Debord (1967) suggest the colonization of media by business happened at the point Crouch sees as the high point of democracy. What Crouch (2004) sees as a fall from the 1950s to the 1970s is for Habermas and Debord what already existed for them before. As such, Crouch's claim of the media's role in rendering the political arena less accessible to the wider public is not novel. The highest point of democracy for Crouch (2004), is for Habermas (1991) and Debord (1967) is the very moment of politics and mass media colonization by commercial imperatives. Still, Crouch's (2004) analysis goes beyond Habermas' (1991) and Debord's (1967) by addressing the role of left political parties in bringing about post-democracy for instance.

### **c) From Citizen to Consumer**

Crouch dedicates chapter 5 to the commercialization of citizenship. First, Crouch retraces the history of the emergence of citizenship and the welfare state by highlighting their significant role in democratizing politics (2004, p. 78). However, their respective establishment was in line with struggles given that rights and the welfare state had to be fought for. With the consolidation of democracy in the second half of the 20th century, social citizenship became increasingly dependent on the quality of public services (2004, p. 78).

The expansion of capitalism slowly drew different spheres of human life within its area of influence; however, an implicit agreement to leave aside social citizenship and the welfare state from the market principles existed. However, the abandonment of public management and its replacement by rational choice and public choice theories in the 1980s resulted in the commercialization of citizenship (2004, p. 82/86). Crouch uses this specific terminology "because each [practice] is premised on the assumption that the quality of public services will be improved if the existing practices and ethos of public service are partially replaced by those typical of commercial practice." (2004, p. 80). Moreover, Crouch claims that "this concept [commercialization] is more accurate than marketization, for some of the

processes now being introduced involve distortions of the market rather than its purification.” (2004, p. 80). The last feature denoted by Crouch vis-à-vis the concept in question is its generality in comparison to privatization: indeed, he acknowledges privatization as the mere alteration of ownership.

The reason for the commercialization of citizenship lies in the profitability of the welfare state: considering the rise in the wealthier segment of the population back in the 1960s and to some lesser extent in the 1970s, the demand for services drastically increased and did not stop at educational, legal and health services (2004, p. 82). The welfare state had been protected from market principles by industrial capitalism. However, the succeeding post-industrial variant of capitalism currently aims at reversing agreements with the support by the World Trade Organization (WTO) for instance. For Crouch, the WTO also emerges as a key post-democratic institution due to its unique focus on commodification of areas formerly isolated from the market, see the liberalization of international exchange with respect to goods and services, while ignoring human priorities (2004, p. 83). The welfare state turns out to be the main area of interest of commercialization, a fact already addressed by other scholars (Hatcher, 2000; Price, Pollock and Shaoul, 1999, cited in Crouch, 2004, p. 83).

The consequence of commercializing citizenship is residualization. This notion postulates the disinterest of the private sector for specific kinds of public services (2004, p. 89). The state then deals with these services which then become residual and characterized by poor quality. The decrease in quality is due to their exclusive usage by the poor and political ineffective segment of society. Crouch declares that “public services of this kind cannot be described as ‘citizenship’: access to them is more a penalty than a right; and the essential citizenship mechanism of voice must not be made available to residualised recipients or they might seek improvements that would break the rule of no competition with market provision” (2004, p. 89/90).

Besides the commercialisation of citizenship and the residualisation of the receivers, Crouch also denotes the consumerist character of citizens: “we take for granted that a party’s programme is a ‘product’, and that politicians try to ‘market’ us their message” (2004, p. 25). The progression from citizen to ‘citizen-consumer’ serves as another proof of the change from Keynesianism to Neo-liberalism and the advent of post-democracy. During the époque of Keynesianism, class consciousness and political actions still enjoyed a high level of support from the citizenry, although the enthusiasm following WWII slowly declined. The

encroachment of Neo-liberalism, the introduction of free-market principles in economics and the coming about of illiberal liberalism in politics forged the 'citizen-consumer'. This expression is also summed up by the description 'marketization of citizenship'.

The emergence of the citizen-consumer in the United Kingdom relates directly to the modernization, reform and 'improvement' of public services. These modifications encompassed funding, evaluation and scrutiny regimes, and led to a further rapprochement/confusion between the private and public spheres. Vidler and Clarke (2005) state these changes emanate from the intention to reward the citizen-consumer. Adhering to this view also means that society is conceived as the sphere of consumerism putting pressure on public services to keep up with rising expectations. However, investigating whether public service usage is made on a voluntarily, involuntarily or coerced basis turns out to be crucial. The public service reforms under New Labour, according to Vidler and Clarke (2005), provide different ways in assessing the social sphere. By approaching the changes in the social sphere from a political economic perspective, the two concepts of citizen and consumer stand in opposition by reflecting the antagonism encountered between the market and the state.

#### **d) Changes in the Government: The Firm as an Institutional Model to be Followed**

For Crouch, 'old' institutions existed in public management under Keynesianism, while the newer version is embodied by the institutional model provided by the firm (Crouch, 2004, p. 39). The enterprise, characterized by both its flexibility vis-à-vis responding to demand as well as in employing or laying off members of its work force (2004, p. 36) and phantasmal existence with respect to rapid fusions, changes of identity and internal reorganizations (2004, p. 36), regularly alters its production according to customers' demands. These continuous changes result in innovative turmoil in the economy. Nevertheless, this model does not meet all needs. This is the point when the state traditionally stepped in to provide services which are not considered to be lucrative enough for the free market (2004, p. 39). The lines between public and private sector were formerly discernible; see the antagonism of the requirement for public services being universally accessible versus services offered on a commercial basis.

With the emergence of post-democracy, the government encounters difficulties in distinguishing the public from the private sphere, as concepts from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>

centuries such as (old/past) public services and citizen entitlements face (new) commercialization. The decline in differentiation according to Crouch reveals the fact that "...governments envy the phantom firm its flexibility and apparent efficiency, and try to imitate it almost heedlessly....government increasingly renounces any distinctive role for public services (which stresses a duty to provide citizens with more or less equal services to a high standard), and requires its departments to act as firms (which stresses a duty providing a service to that quality which is required by the meeting of financial targets)." (Crouch, 2004, p. 40). Means of reaching this post-democratic public sector situation are privatisation, contracting out public services to firms and forcing public sector services to behave as if they belonged to the private sector (2004, p. 40/1). A similar behaviour of the firm manifests itself in the government: the government no longer takes responsibility for the quality of public services so as to escape negative criticism wherewith services that once exclusively were executed under its command lose their public sector character and belonging (2004, p. 41). This development is represented by its advocates as further proof that in post-democracy the private sector deals best with public services due to their expertise.

The firm as a new kind of leading institution has a direct psychological impact on the government: a sharp decrease in the administration's self-confidence with respect to it providing public services. Reasoning according to the firm's mode becomes self-justifying in the sense that the private sector gradually expands its services provided in the public sector resulting eventually in a loss of competence by the state (2004, p. 41). Crouch therefore characterises the government as an "institutional idiot, its every ill-informed move being anticipated in advance and therefore discounted by smart market actors." (Crouch, 2004, p. 41). From this state of affairs results the current economic orthodoxy amounting to the state ensuring market freedom.

Crouch points to the post-democratic reality of the rise in importance and power of the corporate elite: "The more powerful the firm becomes as an organizational form, the more powerful become the individuals who occupy these positions. They become even more powerful as government concedes to them the organization of its own activities and bows to the superiority of their expertise." (Crouch, 2004, p. 43/4). From this development follow two observations: first, the corporate class further consolidates its dominant character in the government; second, the withdrawal of the state also translates into a dearth in funding organization with no lucrative goals which then turn to the corporate sector for funding.

Therefore, the corporate sector wins in terms of influence and can dictate the direction of non-lucrative organizations.

The idea of the firm hollowing out the state is further treated in chapter three. Nevertheless, it has to be stated that Rhodes (1994) already described the firm's take-over of state's services in 1994. This new institutional model results from four interrelated trends leading to the state's hollowing out: first, the diminishing of public intervention and the rise of privatization; second, the failure of both local and central governments to deliver services leading to alternative agencies taking on their former task; third, European Union institutions taking over the British state's functions; fourth, reducing public servants' responsibility by new public management while stressing managerial accountability and better distinguishing between administration and politics (Rhodes, 1994, p. 138/9). Because of this state of public affairs in 1994, Rhodes calls from the beginning for a potential, and possibly wishful, return of bureaucracy so as to reinforce the British state's capacities.

Crouch's denounced intrusion of the private sphere into the public one following the demise of Keynesianism is assessed in a quantitative analysis by Rhodes (1994, p. 139) resulting in a mixed outcome. Rhodes assessed the scope of both government intervention and of the public sector by looking at government employment levels, the amount of public spending and the proportion of industries under public ownership. Bearing these three indicators in mind, Rhodes (1994, p. 139) draws the following picture of the British state after the abandonment of Keynesianism: from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, public spending increased in real terms. Government expenditures rose and fell during the time period stretching from 1979 to 1992: first 43.3 per cent of the Gross National Product (GDP) was dedicated in 1979 to government expenditures. In 1986 government expenditure reached its lowest point when 39.5 per cent of the GDP accounted for these expenditures. In 1992, the expenditures rose for the first time again to 42 per cent. This is the reason why Rhodes claims that "There was no significant cut, therefore, although the fortunes of individual services within this total varied." (1994, p. 139).

Regarding privatization, its advancement is depicted by the following numbers: over half of the public sector in addition to 650,000 employees has been moved from the public sphere to the private one since 1979. Both decreases in nationalized industries and cuts in the civil service amount respectively to 4 per cent and 24 per cent during the time period 1979 to 1992. Putting the cut in civil servants even more drastically, the decrease of non- and

industrial civil servants amounted to a drop from 732 thousands to 554 thousands (Rhodes, 1994, p. 140).

The underlying ideology for the privatization programme and the cuts in government expenditure emanated from the Conservative government: the government refused the “centralising, managerial, bureaucratic, interventionist style of government” (Rhodes, 1994, p. 140), it also refused to be a government that “[old] people what their ambitions should be and how exactly to realise them” (Rhodes, 1994, p. 140) by further justifying their position by the fact that “optimism about the beneficent effects of government intervention had largely disappeared” (Rhodes, 1994, p. 140). Therefore the population was required “to put its faith in freedom and free markets, limited government and strong national defence” (Rhodes, 1994, p. 140).

This short outline of government expenditure, privatization programmes and the cuts within civil servant staff evidences the fact that the reducing of the public sector has been underway for a while given that this reducing counts as a long-term policy goal. As such, Crouch’s claim about the state’s hollowing out following the abandonment of Keynesianism in terms of job cuts is supported by Rhodes’ account while Crouch’s statement on state expenditure is not shared by Rhodes. Comparing Crouch’s to Rhodes’ depiction of the state’s demise, the latter’s account appears to support Crouch’s analysis with quantitative data.

Moreover, the public sector has been contracting out its services to the private sector since Harold Wilson’s Labour government “when [in 1968] private firms were brought in to clean government departments, producing an estimated saving of 35,000 jobs and £500 000 a year” (Rhodes, 1994, p. 140). Therefore, an element of post-democratic novelty, market testing, has been a reality in Britain since the late 1960s. The British contract state further consolidated under Thatcher’s Premiership as well as being expanded to services such as the National Health Service and to local government, see the 1988 Local Government Act resulting in “cuts in manual staffing levels in 57 per cent of the contracts let. The cuts were large for refuse collection (16.9 per cent), street cleaning (25.7 per cent) and building cleaning (18.5 per cent)” (Walsh, cited in Rhodes, p. 141). Although these cuts are generally perceived as harmful to the provided services, Walsh (cited in Rhodes, 1994, p. 140) declares that this mechanism induced a decrease in costs between six and seven per cent. Rhodes sees the contracting mechanism as a distinct feature between a central department and his/her agency executive.

Comparing Rhodes' account to Crouch's shows once more the supports of both scholars for democracy. The comparison, however, also calls post-democracy's novelty into question. Rhodes depicts the developments that occurred in British public policy and within the state by providing quantitative data. The usage of quantitative data not only describes the situation but also allows analysing the beginning transformation of the British state in 1968. As such Rhodes seems to come to similar conclusion to Crouch vis-à-vis the hollowing out of the state. However, two facts set Rhodes apart from Crouch that cannot be overlooked: first, Rhodes acknowledges the benefits of contracting out some services while Crouch seems to condemn every attempt of contracting out; second, Rhodes' account of the hollowed out state precedes Crouch's post-democrat story by ten years. Therefore, asking how innovative Crouch's post-democracy in fact turns out worth being asked.

## **1.2 KEYNESIANISM AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR CROUCH'S DEMOCRATIC SUCCESS**

The reason behind investigating democracy in conjunction with Keynesianism is to scrutinize Crouch's claim that Keynesianism embodied the high time of democracy with respect to its support from the population as well as with its social inclination, see expanding the Welfare State and ameliorating work conditions (Crouch, 2004, p. 5). He then claims that post-democracy emerged with the abandonment of public management and its replacement by Monetarism and subsequently Neo-liberalism. Crouch seems to advocate Keynesianism, understood as a socially inclined political economy, and a return to this form of economic management. First, an explanation of Keynesianism is given prior to dealing with its weaknesses. Subsequently, the risk carried by Keynesian public demand management to turn into a technocracy removed from the citizenry is addressed. A discussion of whether Keynes can in fact be considered as a socialist, or rather as a liberal follows. Eventually, the relevance of Keynesianism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is highlighted.

### **a) Keynesianism Explained**

Keynes aimed with the theory of macro-economics to prove classical economists wrong regarding their assumption that free markets will 'naturally' equilibrate at or near full employment, that is to say finding a balance between supply and demand. Keynes held the view that the economy as a whole was characterized by instability. Supply and demand could encounter an equilibrium that would not lead to full employment (Yergin and Stanislaw,

1998). The reasons for such disequilibrium lie in over-savings and defective investments stemming from feelings of uncertainty.

In order to solve this problem, the state intervenes in the economy by financing the missing amount of investment. The money used in this process is borrowed; nevertheless, this deficit spending creates public jobs as well as raising the work force's purchasing power (Yergin and Stanislaw, 1998), which stimulates growth and hence the ability to repay borrowings. Keynes envisaged a major role in the economy for the government. The government intervenes in an economy characterized by a managed and reformed capitalism discarding both extreme poles, that is to say socialism and free-market. The reason for the accentuation of the government's role is due to its superiority in macro knowledge in comparison to the micro orientation of market agents (Yergin and Stanislaw, 1998).

In times of negative growth or recession, the state has to intervene actively so as to ensure employment. This intervention requires borrowing money causing the public deficit to increase. This mechanism is known as deficit spending. Creating new jobs in public infrastructures, in housing and roads for example, contributes to both public income and wealth counteracting recessionary tendencies (Mahdjoubi, 1997, p. 3). As soon as the economy recovers after negative growth, and public revenues start to increase again, expenditures should gradually decrease.

To sum up, Keynesian economics postulates that in times of economic crisis/hardship featuring a high level of unemployment, government has to intervene by borrowing money so as to keep the level of aggregate demand high. This is designed to maintain low inflation, avoid economic fluctuations and ensure full employment is maintained (Mahjoudbi, 1997, p. 3).

#### **b) Weaknesses of Keynesianism**

As mentioned before, Keynesianism did not enjoy a unanimous support even in its heyday. The lack of support contributed to Keynesianism's debilitation as well as to the economic system's abandonment. The theory of income turned out to be a contentious issue even amongst Keynesian intellectuals (Palley, 2004). Keynesian theory postulates that the labour force receives as wages the value it represents for the firm. Making this assumption takes away the legitimacy of trade unions and other mechanisms to ameliorate the situation of labour in the economic market. Because demand is assumed to increase if stimulus spending is transferred into higher pay, the level of spending money increases. Still, the weakness of



Keynesianism resides in the lack of investigation with respect to production conditions. Due to this lack, it is impossible to trace any influence and/or interaction on aggregate demand (Palley, 2004).

Another weakness of this economic regime is related to the explanation of unemployment. Keynes did not pay enough attention to supply-side economics. Supply-side economics explain for several economists the breakdown of the Philips curve in 1970, besides the rise in both unemployment and inflation. According to Keynes, nominal wage rigidity paired with downward prices would account as factors for rising unemployment (Palley, 2004). Keynes' idea stems from the 1940s economic situation and is explained as follows: lower prices emerge from lower nominal wages. This lowering would have a positive impact on the real value of money which subsequently rises. This increase encourages consumption and people would be inclined to spend their money. Aggregate demand also positively benefits from the rise of real money value. Moreover, real money supply increases due to lower wages reducing interest rates and encouraging investment. In this mode of reasoning, lower nominal prices and wages are seen as solution to unemployment (Palley, 2004).

Another problem related to Keynes's account of unemployment is his disregard for technological progress. Unemployment caused by technical progress therefore cannot be attributed to cyclical weaknesses but structural ones. In this case, deficit spending cannot alleviate the economic crisis but increases national debt (Schmid, Burh, Roth, Steffen, 2006, p. 90). Using tools of macroeconomic regulations and control is challenging due to problems raised by timing with respect to implement regulations and when control should be enforced. Still, finding the adequate time for implementing these regulations and controls is required for achieving procyclical instead of anti-cyclical effects. Moreover, the phenomenon of stagflation, the combination of high inflation and high unemployment, in the 1970s and 1980s further triggered higher level of inflation and unemployment (Schmid, Burh, Roth, Steffen, 2006, p. 91).

### **c) Keynesian Demand Management and the Risk of Technocracy**

Keynesian public demand management - has been acknowledged as a form of corporatism (Phelps, 2006; Crotty, 1999). Corporatism can be defined as the organization of a society by several significant interests groups. The market in the corporatist system is privately owned and has the following features: (i) monopolistic banks; (ii) labour unions

with a significant level of power; and, (iii) big employer confederations. These economic institutions are monitored and supported by a large state bureaucracy. Phelps (2006, p. 2) states that the main function of the corporatist system are to “to give voice and levers of power to a variety and range of social interests – “stakeholders” and the “social partners” in postwar terminology – so that they might be able to have a say or even a veto in market decisions that would harm them.” Stakeholders and social partners’ interests are represented by the state and carry a greater value than individual interests (Phelps, 2006).

Phelps (2006) claims that Keynes’s political economy showed similarities with Italian corporatism (corporatismo), notably in industrial policy and organization theory. In contrast to American neoclassical microeconomics Keynes’ policy supported the government’s efforts to regulate cartels, trade associations, holding companies and monopoly power in general. Keynes’ supported state centred demand management and macroeconomics despite seeking to defend capitalism from socialist alternatives. Crotty (1999) notes that “In the 1920s at least, Keynes was unabashedly corporatist, supporting a powerful microeconomic as well as macroeconomic role of the state”.

Corporatism rests on a bureaucratic apparatus to carry out functions. Such bureaucratic apparatus bears risks of alienating the citizenry from politics and Keynes’ corporatism created aloofness between the political arena and the citizenry; and turn into an undemocratic technocracy. The concept of bureaucracy can be defined as a “hierarchical organisation of officials appointed to carry out certain public objectives” (Etzioni-Halevyi, 1983, p. 85) and is inspired by the ideas of power, domination and authority. Weber (1958), in his seminal work on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* claims that bureaucracy can attain the highest degree of efficiency as well as rationality even whilst rendering the human individual a mere cog in the machine. In order to attain the alleged high degree of rationality and efficiency, the existence and use of authority is central. Halveyi (1983) enumerates the following three kinds of authority that exist within a given society: the traditional sort, which is legitimated by time, the charismatic one, see outstanding personal leadership and finally the legal rational one, which is the basis for bureaucracy. Theoretically bureaucracy and democracy develop at the same time. The simultaneous development does bear risks: the impact of bureaucracy on individuals is important as individuals are highly likely to turn into “Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained level of civilization never before achieved” (Weber, 1958, p. 182). Although the absence of emotion may, or not, pave the way for a rational approach within

bureaucracy, the lack of control by politicians over the bureaucracy should not be overlooked. Bureaucrats are moreover supposed to adopt a neutral position and to participate in policy formulating; neutrality is rejected on the grounds that senior officials are in charge of allocating resources, wherewith lobbying can become very attractive. Crouch maybe overly enthusiastic in seeing corporation as a triangle between trade unions, an economic elite and the state. Nonetheless, Crouch's idea of corporation is more egalitarian in the sense of attributing to trade union an important role in the corporation when compared to the present corporation where trade unions have been pushed out.

#### **d) Keynesianism's Relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Today, Keynes is making a comeback. J. M. Keynes's political-economic theory of public management has been first laid out in his 1936 book *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. Albeit replaced by Monetarism in 1973, Keynesian economics turns out to be still relevant to some particular economic schools of thought, such as Post-Keynesian as well as New-Keynesian economics. This is surprising in the sense of Keynesianism's abandonment in the late 1970s. Another surprise is that the 2008 financial crisis sparked a renewed interest in Keynesian economics (Bowman, 2009; Reedy, 2009) both among policy-makers, see J. K. Galbraith and A. Darling and academics, see Crouch (2009).

Before dealing with the renewed interest in Keynesian economics, it is first interesting to point to a discussion in academia regarding Keynes' political affiliation. Considering that Keynes' economics generally are contrasted with classic economics, a conclusion is all too quickly reached on Keynesianism's political belonging: liberals embrace classic economics while socialists embrace Keynesianism. Without intending to label Keynesianism as belonging to this or that political ideology, pointing to discussions revolving around its ideological belonging evidence both social and liberal tensions. Finally, it has to be said that investigating Keynes' political stance is relevant for unveiling the economist's mind-set and opinions. However, to what extent these perspectives influenced Keynesian economics is both debatable and not subject to the following section. The reason for laying out Keynes' political affiliation and role in fostering the post-WWII economic order is significant for acknowledging two other factors' influencing apart the Great Depression the development of Keynesian economics.

Keynes's influence on Anglo-American discussions during WWII cannot be overlooked, see his role in paving the way for the post-World War II order embodied by the Bretton Wood Accords, while academic discussions on Keynes's adherence to social or liberal ideology never ceased to exist. Moreover, the economist himself added to this confusion by claiming to be a liberal in an ideological sense as well as a Liberal as understood to be a supporter of the then British Liberal Party (Raico, 2008, p.165). Scholars such as Bullock and Shock (1956, cited in Raico, 2008, p.165), E. K. Bramsted and K. J. Melhuish (1978, cited in Raico, 2008, p.165) even range Keynes in the tradition as A. Smith, T. Jefferson and J. Locke. The endorsement of values such as rationality and tolerance, his alleged strong belief in a free society further support the idea of Keynes as a liberal economist. The debate about Keynes's ideological belonging has been further exacerbated by academics claiming that the economist aimed at remodelling past liberal ideas so as to adapt them to a new economic period of time (Raico, 2008, p.165).

However, as Raico (2008, p.165) points out right from the beginning, these apparent liberal tendencies are not reflected in all aspects of Keynes' political thought. On the contrary, he questions the liberal qualification by invoking Keynes's endorsement of mercantilist doctrines, a point that had also been noted by the economist Hutt: "What struck him [Hutt] most of all was that this renowned economist [Keynes] would have us believe that the Mercantilists were right and their Classical critics were wrong (a position expounded in chapter 23 of the *General Theory*" (Hutt, 1936, cited in Raico, 2008, p.166). Keynes turned away from classical economics due to his disillusionment: the theory neither could explain 1920's high unemployment nor the Great Depression leading Keynes to assume that the undirected market was the cause for the economic problems. Following this ideological shift, "Keynes, discarding his "orthodox" predecessor (and contemporaries), aligned himself with what he himself dubbed that "brave army of heretics," Silvio Gesell, J. A. Hobson, and other social-reformist and socialist critics of capitalism whom mainstream economists had dismissed as crackpots" (Friedman, 1997, cited in Raico, 2008, p.167). As early as 1934, Keynes already sympathized with Gesell and Hobson due to their rejection of "the idea that the existing economic system is, in any significant sense, self-adjusting...The system is not self-adjusting, and, without purposive direction, it is incapable of translating our actual poverty into our potential plenty." (Keynes, 1973a, cited in Raico, 2008, p.167). Keynes' *The General Theory* was written with the aim to offer an analytical context to legitimize this stance.

The second factor positioning Keynes's even further from liberalism is his essay on *National Self-Sufficiency* published in 1933 positioning him closer to regimes with a strong state. Keynes affirmed in this essay that he "sympathize[d], [...] with those who would minimize [...] economic entanglement among nations. Ideas, knowledge, science, hospitality, travel--these are the things which should of their nature be international. But let goods be homespun whenever it is reasonably and conveniently possible, and, above all, let finance be primarily national." (Keynes, 1933, p.759). Nevertheless, he also points to the dangers of dismantling a country in general and its economy in particular too quickly of its international trading partners. Still, Keynes acknowledges the advantages of this modification: "I am inclined to the belief that, after the transition is accomplished, a greater measure of national self-sufficiency and economic isolation among countries than existed in 1914 may tend to serve the cause of peace, rather than otherwise [...] the age of economic internationalism was not particularly successful in avoiding war; and if its friends retort, that the imperfection of its success never gave it a fair chance, it is reasonable to point out that a greater success is scarcely probable in the coming years" (Keynes, 1933, p. 759).

Ikenberry (1992) provides further evidence of Keynes's socialist economic vein. During the Second World War, American and British intellectuals debated regarding the post-war order, especially in economic and monetary terms. Two different conceptions regarding this rearrangement emerged: on the one hand, American officials endorsed a system featuring open trade; on the other hand, British officials spoke out for economic stability and full employment by means of imperialism and bilateral agreements (1992, p.289). To further summarize the antagonistic positions, it is possible to state that the American side aimed at a multilateral and impartial trading regime, while the British counterpart advocated economic groupings according to preferences. In the end, the economic reestablishment featured a liberal world economy to the surprise of many (1992, p.289). The Anglo-American order paved the way for a multilateral trade and payment regime having at its heart the harmonisation of trade expansion and openness in relation to economic stabilization and full employment. This system soon became known as the "political miracle" (Gardner, 1985/6, cited in Ikenberry, 1992, p. 290), the starting point of the "30 Glorieuses [30 glorious years]" (Fourastié, 1979) as well as the "Edad de Oro del capitalismo [Golden Age of Capitalism]" (Barciela, 2005). According to Ikenberry (p. 294), the post-war settlement mainly reflects American interests which can be explained by structural factors. Still, the decision to choose this particular post-war order is not completely

explained by structural factors: first, in fact several different post-war orders could have been compatible with American interests. The answer to the question why this particular post-war order was elected resides in the voicing/delineation of interests and their (hidden) purposes. Second, it is worth inquiring how the different negotiation parties came to a joint result. For Ikenberry (1992, p.291), power and interests do not provide a complete explanation to this question while Keynesianism does. Indeed, public views regarding the role and duties of the state in foreign policy and national economies had undergone transformation in both United States and in the United Kingdom since the interwar period (1992, p.292). The restructuring of American foreign policy with respect to internationalist thinking combined with the so-called Keynesian revolution played a decisive part in establishing an innovative post-war economic order satisfying public demand (1992, p.292).

As noted before, the liberal and socialist economic dynamics existed in parallel. However, invoking international law economic internationalization had been recognized and enacted since the 19th century, see the forced Treaties of Nanjing (1848), Tianjin (1848) as well as the Convention of Beijing (1860) for China and trade Treaties from 1854 and 1861 between Japan and the United States, France, Prussia, the United Kingdom, Russia and Holland (WTO, 2007, p. 35). Keynesianism, in opposition, remained at a national level with almost autarkic purposes (Keynes, 1933).

Crouch never invokes Keynes as an economist; however, his allusions to public management and Keynesianism go hand in hand and appear as the high tide of democratic blossoming. Crouch's nostalgic view on public demand management and Keynesian economics in an era of internet and housing bubbles, financial and economic crises has been echoed following the 2008 financial crisis in a renewed interest in Keynesianism.

This revived interest in both expanding monetary policy and fiscal stimulus comes at a time of financial crisis that has often been compared to the 1930 Great Depression (Reddy, 2009; Bowman, 2009). Both academics and policy-makers took up Keynesian ideas anew: Crouch (2009) talks of a privatized version of Keynesianism while Posner (2009), coming from a former liberal position, embraced in 2009 Keynesian economics; both Brown and Darling saw Keynesian economics as a solution to the financial crisis (Stratton and Seagor, 2009) while Obama even went as far as limiting banks' speculative power and announcing stimulus plans to combat economic recession (Cho and Appelbaum, 2010).

Posner (2009) discusses in the column *How I became Keynesian* his valuation of Keynesian economics in the light of the housing bubble, financial crisis, underestimated economic consequences, the failure of orthodox monetary policy as well as over the lack of consensus regarding how to boost the economy. Keynes' General Theory seems to convince Posner in combatting the main obstacle to pave the way for a blossoming economy: unemployment. Posner's (2009) perceived parallels between the 2008 financial crisis and the 1930 Great Depression lead him to embrace Keynesian economics. In contrast, Crouch (2009) does not support the revival of traditional Keynesian economics among both academics and policy-makers; however, he sees a revived privatized version among the people. For Crouch the emergence of privatized Keynesianism in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (in terms of a boom in personal debt) accounts as another watershed in post-democracy.

#### **e) Crouch's Account on Privatized Keynesianism**

The exchangeability in semantics, see capitalism being synonymous for democracy and vice versa, sealed for Crouch the fate of capitalism's take off and democracy's demise: "Following the fall of communism at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it became common to equate capitalism with democracy" (Fukuyama, cited in Crouch 2009a, p. 382). The equation was strengthened by a growing and historically novel preference of governments in the United States [...] democracy was considered to produce polities within which citizens would ask governments to do less and, by implication, markets to do more." (Crouch, 2009a, p. 382). As the genesis of privatised Keynesianism can be counted the mismatch between capitalism and democracy. These systems and regimes working together have been so far addressed by two different political-economic approaches intending to tackle, or to brush aside, the different ambitions of democracy (functioning at a national level) and capitalism (encompassing on a global level): public demand management as embodied by Keynesianism and privatized Keynesianism understood as "a system of markets alongside extensive housing and other debt among low- and medium-income people linked to unregulated derivatives markets." (Crouch, 2009a, p. 382). The movement from Keynesianism to its privatized counterpart consists of two characteristics: "the availability of alternative ideas and the existence of a class, the service of whose interests would serve a general interest. It is often claimed that at the present juncture we lack the former (Skidelsky, 2009) while no one notices the latter. The absence of ideas is considerably exaggerated in these discussions; the question of a leading class is more important." (Crouch, 2009a, p. 395). In more general

terms, privatised Keynesianism means the relaxation on private bank lending that allowed for a massive increase in personal debt to fund economic demand.

Crouch identifies instability as both another source of privatized Keynesianism and as a weakness of neo-liberal ideology. Instability in turn advanced the development of privatised Keynesianism “the growth of credit markets for poor and middle-income people, and of derivatives and futures markets among the very wealthy. This combination produced a model of privatised Keynesianism (Crouch 2008; Bellofiore and Halevi (forthcoming)) that occurred initially by chance, a real case of market entrepreneurship, but which gradually became a matter for public policy so important as to threaten the entire neo-liberal project.” (Crouch, 2009a, p. 390). Otherwise, the emergence of privatized Keynesianism is bound to the 1970s inflationary crisis leading to Keynesianism’s abandonment. With the emphasis on avoiding inflation at any cost, the new economic orthodoxy came about. Organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund contributed to its legitimation (Crouch, 2009a, p. 386).

Risk counts as another basis of privatized Keynesianism. As Crouch states “Through markets in derivatives and futures the great Anglo-American finance houses learned how to trade in risk. They found they could buy and sell risky holdings provided only that purchasers were confident that they could find further purchasers in turn; and that depended on the same confidence. Provided markets were free from regulation and capable of extensive reach, these trades enabled a very widespread sharing of risk, which made it possible for people to invest in many ventures that would otherwise have seemed unwise (see also Leyshon and French 2009, in this issue). Meanwhile, the liberation of global finance markets brought funds located in ever more extended parts of the world to share the burdens of risk-bearing.” (Crouch, 2009a, p. 392). Risk has been the basis for economic crises in the late 19th century as much as in the late 1920s. The main shift to notice from Keynesianism to privatized Keynesianism is the move beyond politics from social democracy featuring a strong work force supporting the government to a neo-liberal conservative class stemming from the financial sector.

Globalization further contributed to privatized Keynesianism’s take off by valorizing private transnational corporations. However, Crouch’s denotes one fundamental problem in the interplay between capitalism and democracy: “if the instability of free markets had to be overcome to usher in the mass consumption economy, how did the latter survive the return of the former?” (Crouch, 2009a, p. 390). The answer resides in the increase of credit markets



targeting the middle and the poor class of society as well as future market opportunities for the affluent class. These two new markets on the one hand saved neo-liberalism; on the other hand, they consolidated the advent of privatized Keynesianism that the government subsequently adopted as public policy. Privatized Keynesianism (i.e. personal debt escalation) counts as much as a threat as a rescue for Neo-liberalism (Crouch, 2009a, p. 390).

The parallels of Keynesianism and its privatized version reside in the handling of debt, although at different levels: “Under original Keynesianism it was governments that took on debt to stimulate the economy. Under the privatised form individuals, particularly poor ones, took on that role by incurring debt on the market. The main motors were the near-constant rise in the value of owner-occupied houses and apartments alongside an extraordinary growth in markets in risk. This regime collapsed, partly during a repetition of energy and other commodity inflation, but largely because of certain internal contradictions.” (Crouch, 2009b, p. 1) and in the harmonizing of capitalism and democracy: to “reconcil[e] the uncertainties and instabilities of a capitalist economy with democracy’s need for stability for people’s lives and capitalism’s own need for confident mass consumers” (Crouch, 2009a, p. 382). In comparison to its predecessor, the reconciliation undertaken by privatized Keynesianism turns out to be ephemeral.

Both regimes also face the same tensions of insecurity and uncertainty as well as an ambivalent relation between firms and consumers “that between the insecurity and uncertainty created by the requirements of the market to adapt to shocks, and the need for democratic politics to respond to citizens’ demands for security and predictability in their lives [...] within advanced capitalism itself, which needs on the one hand consumers on whose confidence firms can depend when planning their production, and on the other a capacity to respond to periods of declining demand by reducing the quantity and wages of labour, which in turn undermines consumer confidence. The tension can never be ‘resolved’ as it is endemic to the only successful form of political economy that we know; it has to be managed, by a series of regimes that will always in the end wear out and need to be replaced by something else.” (Crouch, 2009b, p. 1/2).

Crouch also explains the flaws and novelties of privatised Keynesianism in comparison to other economic theories: “All theories of market economics depend on the assumption that market actors are perfectly informed, but privatised Keynesianism depended on what were presumed to be the very smartest actors concerned, the financial institutions of Wall Street and the City of London, having highly defective knowledge. More accurately,

financial entrepreneurs and accountancy firms developed forms of knowledge that encouraged eventually self-destructive decisions. This is the Achilles' heel of the model, corresponding to the inflationary ratchet of original Keynesianism. In terms of distributive politics, inflation can be seen as granting many different groups a larger share of the cake by inventing cardboard cake—increases in money values of declining purchasing power. Under privatised Keynesianism vast quantities of totally fictitious cake were produced, on the basis of the notional values of which even vaster quantities of such cake were leveraged.” (Crouch, 2009a, p. 393).

The actual functioning of privatized Keynesianism bases itself on the explosion of the housing market, a growing number of credit cards and bank loans leading individuals to become the new debt takers. Crouch (2009a, p. 392) claims that this practice had already been used as public policy by the British government in the 1980s when the government privatized council housing making these estates available to a segment of society with moderate salaries: “as an initial implicit public policy boost to the [neo-liberal] model back in the 1980s when the privatisation of council housing enabled large numbers of people on moderate incomes to take on mortgages and, later, to explore the scope for extended mortgages. But the move to more explicit policies to have house prices constantly rising crept up during the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century until the massive interventions into housing finance and the banking sector in general during 2007 and 2008” (Crouch, 2009a, p. 392). This led people to indebt themselves even more while house prices continued to rise. The state consequently had to intervene following the house market implosion as well as in the 2008 banking sector crisis by bailing out banks (Watson, 2009, cited in Crouch, 2009a, p. 392).

Finally, Crouch maintains that “once privatised Keynesianism had become a model of general economic importance, it became a kind of collective good, however nested in private actions it was. Necessary to it was behaviour by banks that has to be defined as irresponsible, as it involved their not carrying out checks and accountancy practices that they were in principle assumed to do. Therefore that very irresponsibility became a collective good.” (Crouch, 2009a, p. 394). Moreover, privatized Keynesianism is also bound to develop into a new form, see “Sharing neo-liberal prejudices against government as such, frightened at the impact of regulation on growth and believing in the superiority of corporate directors over themselves at nearly everything, politicians increasingly rely on corporate social responsibility for the achievement of several policy goals. We should therefore anticipate a

shift from unregulated privatised Keynesianism to self-regulated privatised Keynesianism.” (Crouch, 2009a, p. 397). Nevertheless, the fundamental question remains the same as from the very beginning of Crouch’s analyses of post-democracy and privatized Keynesianism: how can the functioning of democracy and capitalism be harmonized? A more specific question regarding the development of privatized Keynesianism is: what are the ways to manage the financial irresponsibility which currently has been established as a public good?

The former antagonistic forces of democracy and capitalism dissolved with the recognition of the work force as a political class as well due to Keynesianism, when mass consumption triumphed while the market expanded its scope. This golden era of capitalism made capitalism and democracy dependent on one another: “The virtuous spiral of the US Fordist model of mass production technology linked to rising wages and therefore to rising mass consumption and more demand for mass-produced goods was part of the answer. The more extensive approach to social policy of the kind emerging in the Scandinavian and British welfare states addressed the problem of insecurity. Confident, secure working-class consumers, far from being a threat to capitalism, could enable an expansion of markets and profits on an unprecedented scale. Capitalism and democracy became interdependent.” (Crouch, 2009a, p. 384).

The interdependence of the two systems soon reached a stale mate: within the framework of a free market, both employment and wages are subjugated to fluctuations. Given that the state would not intervene to keep demand and investment levels up, the wealthier segment of society, the elite, feared for a decline in economic growth and the market becoming inflexible (Crouch, 2009a, p. 384). The envisaged solution by neo-classical theory, the market adjusting itself quickly, did not occur for the following reasons: first, the stipulated and necessary ‘purity’ of the market to deal with this kind of shocks was not verified; second, the supposedly rational actor who would take risks in the economy did not crystallize. In fact, the generations living in the Keynesian framework either experienced one of two world wars, if not even two, wherewith their willingness to discount previous events when planning future expenses was diminished. Crouch illustrates this thought by the following sentence: “Their [people’s] most likely guide to the future is likely to be their experience of the past, and they will err on the side of risk aversion when making their judgements. The adult generations of the post-war period, with their experience of two world wars and a major world slump, were likely to be particularly risk averse.” (Crouch, 2009a, p. 385).

Comparing Crouch's initial conception of Keynesianism in *Post-democracy* (2004) to his understanding of both Keynesianism and its privatized version in 2009 shows in what way the perception altered. In *Post-democracy* (2004), Crouch conceives Keynesianism in more political terms when compared to his vision of Keynesianism only five years later. The initial conception revolved around opportunities provided by Keynesianism to formerly marginalized classes, in particular the working class. Following the disastrous years of WWII, the era of public management was marked by prosperity and a high support for the democratic regime in place among the population. Prosperity, demands for more rights and better work conditions as well as an expansive Welfare state appear to be the main characteristics Crouch attributes to Keynesianism in post-democracy. This positive view alters when compared to Keynesianism's depiction in the two papers from 2009 dealing each with privatized Keynesianism as an unacknowledged policy and ways to overcome this new economic regime.

In fact, Keynesianism is treated from an economic perspective. This different assessment enables Crouch to point to financial and economic parallels between these two systems. Traditional Keynesianism as well as its privatized version is defined as a "policy regime [...] [that] succeeded in reconciling the uncertainties and instabilities of a capitalist economy with democracy's need for stability for people's lives and capitalism's own need for confident mass consumers." (Crouch, 2009a, p. 382). Public demand management's weakness does not emanate from politics but from economics: "The importance of neo-corporatism for present purposes is that it addressed the Achilles' heel of Keynesianism: the inflationary tendencies of its politically determined ratchet." (Crouch, 2009a, p. 387) While exhibiting political and economic power "Keynesianism had become emblematic of a far wider range of policies of regulation, welfare provision and subsidy" (Crouch, 2009a, p. 387), and the capacity to frame capitalism for some time "Combined with Fordist production systems, the model now appears to characterise a particular historical period and a stage in the development of capitalism, or a distinctive accumulation regime (Boyer 2004a, 2004b and 2005). Seen from one perspective (Giddens 1998) it was suited to a mass industrial working class producing standardised goods and accepting standardised government and welfare services. This was not just a production regime, but virtually an entire society." (Crouch, 2009a, p. 387/8).

In *Post-democracy*, Crouch mentions Keynesianism in relation to democracy's high tide of both Northern America and Western Europe: "In most of Western Europe and North

America we had our democratic moment around the mid-point of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. [...] For the first time in the history of capitalism, the general health of the economy was seen as depending on the prosperity of the mass of wage-earning people. This was clearly expressed in the economic policies associated with Keynesianism, but also in the logic of the cycle of mass production and mass consumption embodied in so-called Fordist production methods. In those industrial societies which did not become communist, a certain social compromise was reached between capitalist business interests and working people.” (Crouch, 2004, p. 7). Keynesianism’s links to politics, and above all its repercussions, cannot be overlooked, see the abandonment of Keynesianism triggered the vanishing of the working class, which in turn altered the existing relationship between the electorate and political parties.

The readings published respectively in 2004 and 2009 still evidence Crouch’s conception of Keynesianism to be intimately bound to social-democratic democracy as well as to the Fordist model of production. These two sides of the Keynesian coin allowed in Crouch’s view the integration of formerly marginalized classes, see the working class, which both called for more political and social rights while collaborating with business in making the economy thrive. Nevertheless, it seems as if the political advantageous side of Keynesianism was on the one side greater important to Crouch than economic implication when dealing with public demand management; on the other hand, the economic side of Keynesianism sees itself to be upgraded in its privatized version. Regarding privatized Keynesianism, the main associated topics revolve around debts, the housing markets as well as the dissolution of capitalism’s and democracy’s difference. These characteristics enable one to state that Crouch’s outlook on the future worsened when speaking of privatized Keynesianism. Bearing in mind that the privatized version already depicts the economic situation faced by many people in times of financial crisis, Crouch’s opinion does not come as a surprise.

To sum up, Crouch’s perception of Keynesianism carried a political connotation in *Post-democracy* (2004) when compared to *Privatized Keynesianism: An unacknowledged Policy Regime* (2009a) and *What will follow the Demise of Privatized Keynesianism?* (2009b). Discussing both Keynesianism and privatized Keynesianism five years later it transpires that Crouch now sees these kinds of demand management from a more economic perspective. This shift in perspective also has to be assessed within a broader context. In 2004, Western Europe as well as Northern America paid more attention to political events such as European Union enlargement as well as to the War on Terror. Five years later, the so-

called global financial crisis was under its way, although its global encompassing character is debatable. National debts and (youth) unemployment reach new heights while the Euro currency underwent a severe crisis leading many academics to compare this crisis to the Great Depression. Within this context, economics partially crowded politics out of newspapers headlines, governmental discussions and civil manifestations. Therefore, Crouch's move in assessing Keynesianism is hardly surprising, even more so in the light of Crouch's writing focusing on political economy.

### **1.3 CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlined Crouch's understanding of post-democracy as well as his conception of democracy and his related political-economic framework. Crouch does not understand post-democracy in a purely political sense, but also adds sociological, media and economic aspects. In fact, Crouch sees post-democracy as a non-acknowledged battle ground between politics and economics, where economics appears to infiltrate politics to create a regime best suited for dominant private interests. Through this infiltration, political actors turn away from their initial purpose of claiming rights from the state and questioning societal arrangements with other political parties, to supporting dominant economic interests when holding office. As such, political office is corrupted and becomes a tool in reaching particular economic ends. In the chapter it was pointed out that Crouch's (2004) high point of democracy has been identified by both Habermas (1962) and Debord (1967) as the high time of mass media. So, Crouch (2004) account on mass media is not novel whilst the supposed Keynesian high point of democracy is debatable.

This scenario holds true according to Crouch in the era of Neo-liberalism. This era emerged following the oil crisis in the 1970s when Keynesian demand management, was abandoned in favour of Neo-liberalism, known as new public demand management. Crouch seems nostalgic for Keynesianism throughout his depiction of post-democracy which he also describes as being the high point of democracy. Weakness of Keynesianism were identified as the lack of attention paid by Keynes to conditions of production, reasons for unemployment and technological progress. Risks carried by Keynesian demand management, in contrast to Crouch's (2004) idea of Keynesianism as high point of democracy, are the removal of the citizenry from politics by Keynesian technocratic demand management.

Whether Keynesianism could have survived in its established form following the 1970s oil crisis has been discussed in the second part of this chapter. The weaknesses laid out

showed why this public management order could not have been sustained as it was then configured. However, Crouch offers a very interesting account on Keynesianism's privatized aspects which turn out to be reminiscent of former state actions such as bail-outs, fiscal stimulus and a personalized debt driven model of demand.

While Crouch's opinion that democracy blossomed under Keynesian public management holds true in the light of social democracy and after the disastrous years of WWII, the neo-liberal privatized version of Keynesianism raises questions. The mere fact of two political economies co-existing in one delineated group of countries within one global capitalist system is fundamentally noteworthy. Today people incur debt in a way similar to states during traditional Keynesianism. Banks were publicly bailed out by states during the 2008 financial crisis. Who would take on the cost of bailing out people that proclaimed themselves bankrupt? 'Bailing out' the huge number and overly indebted citizens would bankrupt most Western states and is hence economically inconceivable. Traditional, privatized and new Keynesianism all suffer from the same flaw: in order to stimulate the economy huge borrowing takes place. Crouch observes that privatized Keynesianism had to be supplemented by new state Keynesianism to bail out the banks. He therefore says that state Keynesianism is not only superior to any other kind of Keynesianism, but essential.

## **CHAPTER 2: POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE GLOBAL FIRM IN CROUCH'S POST-DEMOCRACY**

This chapter reflects upon the two different institutions: one that is subject to a post-democratic transformation according to Crouch resulting in its hollowing out; the other one is unveiled by Crouch as the driving force of the post-democratic order. The first institution is the political party, while the second institution is the global firm. Political parties are generally assumed to embody a particular ideology. Moreover, political parties serve as a means of ideological representation on a governmental level. Crouch's post-democratic party analysis focuses on left political parties in general and the British New Labour party under Tony Blair in particular. Other political parties such as the German socialist party (SPD), the Italian social-liberal Reformist party (Riformisti Italiani) and the centre-right party Forza Italia (Movimento Politico Forza Italia) also receive minor attention. The attention paid to these political parties serves to either illustrate their same fate which is also experienced by other European left political parties or to either demonstrate the convergence of left and right political parties not only in terms of values and ideologies but also by the origin of their supporters.

According to Crouch the second institution, the global firm, appears in contrast to the hollowed out and passive political parties as the active as well as expansive institution in pursuing the post-democratic order. This driving is facilitated by both the phenomenon of globalization and in overcoming potential nation state level barriers, such as political parties, by means of infiltration. The infiltration occurs according to Crouch mainly in left political parties which formerly aimed at instituting egalitarian politics. The act of infiltration also contains the spread of free-market principles into other spheres than economics. The hollowing out of political parties allows the firm to advance its institutional model – a replica of its functioning transposed onto the state.

This chapter deals in the first part with Crouch's account of political parties' role in fostering the post-democratic order. The chapter then reviews three different opinions that support, nuance and contradict Crouch's account of New Labour's leading part in post-democracy. The next part deals with the role of the global firm in post-democracy disclosing supportive and contrary arguments relative to Crouch. Finally, two cases are provided where the new institutional model of the firm has been applied.



The fourth chapter of Crouch's (2004) book entitled 'The Political Party under Post-democracy' deals with the challenge encountered by the political party/association in post-democracy. The main challenge posed by the post-democratic regime to the political party can be summed up as the dissolving of class structure paralleled by the ascending power of the firm. Consequences for the core of the party are regular revisions of the leadership as well as the incorporation of lobbyists and advisors within the party ranks. The disappearance of political programmes and internal policy debates comes about.

Crouch (2004, p. 70) divides the traditional constituency of political parties into several fluid concentric circles: the leader emanates from the activist circle, while the activist's circle in turn originates from party membership belonging to the manual working class. Hence historically the interests and worries of the designated electorate were voiced. The existing intermediaries between the leadership and the electorate function in a two-way mechanism passing by/through the various circles. Crouch (2004, p. 76) then transposes this functioning onto the Labour party and claims that this specific party construction is crucial to the self-image and self-perception of working-class parties. This statement rests on the fact that working class parties once manifested themselves as social movements and then crystallized into political parties (Crouch, 2004, p. 71).

According to Crouch (2004, p. 77), the political party today exhibits simultaneously democratic and pre-democratic features. Mass party structure and its elected leadership remain important for ideological reasons while the elected leadership also becomes increasingly dependent on managers, experts and lobbies. In the post-democratic order, opinion polling and policy work carried out by experts become the norm in policy formation. Pre-democratic characteristics are an unequal access to the political arena and unequal power within it. It is the ruling elite that enjoys a privileged access to the political sphere and an unequal power in the political and economic spheres. An example of pre-democratic features is the reappearance and the enforcement of privileges (Crouch, 2004, p. 77). In post-democracy it is the firm and other economic/business interests that enjoy advantages. In Crouch's understanding (2004, p. 77), centre-left parties illustrate well the tension experienced in the post-democratic order. Moreover, the lack of new parties shows the binding of new capital with an old political organisation.

## **2.1 CROUCH'S POST-DEMOCRATIC PARTIES ANNIHILATING THE LEFT-RIGHT DICHOTOMY IN POLITICS**

### **a) A Post-democratic Left Political Party: New Labour in England**

Crouch (2004, p. vii) states that towards the end of the 1990s the interest of the wealthier segment of society was further extended at a time when most European Union governments were centre-left. This paradox is explained, Crouch (2004, p. viii) suggests, by so-called 'experts', 'lobbyists' and 'focus groups' infiltrating left parties such as British New Labour. This process is defined by the quest for a new identity by the British socialists. With the progressive shrinking of the manual working class, the Labour party faced an electoral vacuum. Within the Labour party's elite circles, such a decline in the traditional manual working class core vote justified the admission of new non-traditional members such as business lobbyists. The defeat in 1979 left the Labour party weak and spurred a leftward move. However, after 1983 there was a general shift to the right. According to Crouch, this move to the right also implied a disassociating stance from the party's past justifying the party's declining attention upon social justice. Crouch (2004, p. 64) further claims that the semantic change from Labour to New Labour reflects the move from a political party suited for democracy to one suited for post-democracy. Crouch feels uncomfortable with the new political class developing around New Labour. These associations not only displaced the old party structure but also relativized the affiliation to a fixed social class. Besides these observations, Crouch (2004, p. 60) also denounces the party's apparent narcissism: the party leaders are only interested in their own well-being leaving aside concerns of their electorate. In fact, "They [New Labour Members of Parliament] are encouraged to seek no means of social improvement other than for themselves and their children obediently to climb the career ladders established by business elites." (Crouch, 2004, p. 60). This egocentrism occurs at the cost of political, economic and social causes such as cuts in education and arts, the rolling back of the state in economics and the devaluation of public services. This disinterest in engaging in redistributive politics is reflected in New Labour party members' response to posing a credible rivalry to the centre-right parties. This potential rivalry stems from the fact that if "New Labour in Britain are at last successfully rivalling the centre-right in their appeal to them [the centre-right electorate], it is because they have started doing the same, not because they are articulating wider concerns of these groups [lower middle-class interests], which might be uncomfortable for the corporate elite. They are represented as having no

discontent except with the quality of public services – which is increasingly taken to mean that they want them privatized.” (Crouch, 2004, p. 59/60).

Crouch (2004, p. 64) further notes the ‘floating’ feature of parties voided of their traditional electoral base, an important characteristic of post-democracy. This vacuum is the antithesis of politics. This vacuum was soon filled up with economic agents in the case of New Labour. Reflected in its social and economic policy agendas, a clear cut differentiation between the post 1997 socialist government and the former neo-liberal conservative government is hard to identify. Crouch (2004, p. 64) then alleged that New Labour converged and co-operated in more details with businesses than the antecedent conservative government. This collaboration, perhaps surprisingly, contributed to the British socialist’s popularity among the electorate. Comparing the British case to Germany and Italy, the two continental European countries’ socialist parties (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) and the Democratici della Sinistra) did not endorse such an open approach as New Labour vis-à-vis business, although the German and Italian socialist parties headed in the same direction. This, Crouch (2004, p. 65) argues, can be explained in the light of the significance of trade unions and other actors from the industrial society. Crouch (2004, p. 63) locates the problem of contemporary reformism within several centre-left parties. The German SPD with the Neue Mitte strain, the Riformisti trend in the Italian Socialist Party and the Third way rhetoric of New Labour are examples of problem struck reformism. All of these parties had to face in the past a significant decrease in their social base. Following from this fact, Crouch (2004, p. 63) holds that contact points between the leadership and the electorate could no longer be sustained and the prospects of a future-oriented party and programme fell away. Evoking the future-oriented character of socialist parties is crucial: this political camp once took care of incorporating the working class into a new political system hence challenging legacies stemming from previous regimes, such as monarchies, where political decision making belonged to elites.

#### **b) Retracing the Convergence of Left and Right Political Parties in England**

For Crouch, on one hand, left parties were the democratic moment of politics as they brought the masses, i.e. the demos, into the political arena. As he states; “...if politics is becoming post-democratic...the political left will be experiencing a transformation that seems to reverse most of its achievements during the twentieth century. During this period the left struggled...to admit the voices of ordinary people into affairs of the state.” (Crouch,

2004, p. 4). Conservative parties, on the other hand, are inherently fused with pre-democratic features and privileges. Similar to left parties, Conservative parties also underwent a change in their values and composition. Traditionally, these parties represented feudal interests, imperialism and the monarchy; the wish for a strong army, restrained social policies, the defence of the church and low tax. In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the government of the Conservative Prime Minister Macmillan showed a more leftist inclination in politics when compared to Conservative party aspirations at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Macmillan endorsed a mixed economy approach in economics while introducing corporatist policies for encouraging growth. Macmillan's Premiership also implemented several social reforms: the Clean Air Act (1956), the Housing Act (1957) and the Factories Act (1961) are just a few examples (Middleton, 1997, p. 422). Investigating the Conservative party today, the concept 'Big Society' is on the tip of everyone's tongue. The aim behind this term is to strengthen local communities by providing them with more power. By transferring power from Whitehall to local communities, for example by creating 'Community First' so as to financially support local social actions and community groups as well as the establishment of the 'National Citizen Service' that intends to engage young people from different backgrounds to team up, the British Conservative Party hopes to see more engaged citizens (Conservatives, 2013). Conservative support does not solely emanate from the top/elite to be implemented in a top-down fashion, but arises from the citizens across the social spectrum. As a response to 'Big Society' social policy, New Labour now promotes the concept of 'Blue Labour' as well as the formerly conservative 'One Nation' concept (Labour, 2013).

With the surprising defeat of Labour at the 1992 General election, the need to amend elements of the socialist party in terms of philosophy and ideology became evident. A. Giddens, proposed the concept of 'Third Way' as distinct from liberal capitalism with the embedment of free-market superiority and democratic socialism by focusing on the essential role of the state in demand management (British Broadcasting Corporation, 1999). This distinction was not to everyone's liking: some people characterized this approach as the "Loch Ness Monster of British politics" (British Broadcasting Corporation, 1999) or as sheer "benevolent pragmatism" (British Broadcasting Corporation, 1999). Narrowing down the goals, this altering synthesis of left- and right-wing politics supported growth, entrepreneurship/innovation, the creation of wealth, the global firm and a strong focus on the state's role in fostering social justice. This approach also relied on the following values: belief in the significance of community, duty to provide equality of opportunity and to act

responsible. Moreover, Giddens saw problems arising for the framework of the traditional nation-state within a Third way perspective: according to Giddens, the nation-state neither responds to small scale problems nor handles the issues exceeding its framework (British Broadcasting Corporation, 1999).

Considering the Third Way approach as innovative is debatable: moving from Butskillism to Blatcherism, New Labour's pledge after the victory in 1997 to respect the antecedent Conservative government's spending limits, to implement political right and political left positions, and the frequent usage of stake-holding and communitarian vocabulary gave the impression of no clear distinction between the former Conservative government and the elected New Labour government (Gamble and Wright, 1997, p. 53, cited in Kingdom, 2003, p. 302). Other evidence of supposed conservative inspiration stems from the pursuance of a so-called "Downsian strategy" (Gamble and Wright, 1997, p. 227, cited in Kingdom, 2003, p. 302) in gathering socialist votes while disrespecting traditional political principles/convictions. The quote that "Blair [...] successfully plundered the centre-right wardrobe, the Conservatives could find little to wear" (Kingdom, 2003, p. 303) addresses the practise of political confusion (Peele, 1988, p. 145, cited in Kingdom, 2003, p. 303).

In 2011 New Labour selected M. Glasman as the party's seminal theorist who forged the oxymoron 'Blue Labour'. This term stands for the attempt to remove the lack of attention payed by the Labour party with respect to the significance of the family, tradition and religious faith in uniting society. Glasman also points to the necessity to concentrate on local activism and the arising opportunity to incorporate citizens in policy-making (Partridge, 2011). Glasman's first statement has been picked up by J. Rutherford, who justifies this absence of attention by the working class culture in the post-WWII years. Stears, another contributor to the book entitled 'The Labour tradition and the Politics of Paradox' advices Labour to implement community organizing as did the current President of the United States, Barack Obama (Partridge, 2011).

The confusion between left and right parties also is perceptible among centrist parties such as the Liberals Democrats. Forming the coalition government with the Conservative since 2010, the Liberal Democrats managed to extend spending cuts to the military, a traditional conservative sphere. Partridge claims that in order for New Labour to retard Cameron's programme, the usage of pressure groups and intensive opinion polling becomes a requirement (Partridge, 2011). To relate Partridge's view to Crouch's (2004, p. 74) argument vis-à-vis New Labour's post-democratic character, focusing to win elections by opinion

polling cannot go hand in hand with a genuine strong political programme as attention derives from the opinion of voters. This development gives rise to so-called ‘sound bites’ by politicians so as to win over the electorate’s vote by the means of populism. Populism often conceals the truth regarding problems. Another criticism addressed to ‘Blue Labour’ which portrays New Labour’s post-democratic stance is the idea of mutualisation and decentralisation resulting in “the American model of charity and philanthropy which would lead to the unwelcome position of a progressive party leaving people dependent on hand-outs from wealthy individuals” (H. Blears, cited in Partridge, 2011, p.1).

**c) A Post-democratic Right Political Party: Forza Italia in Italy**

Crouch (2004, p. 75) takes Forza Italia as an example of a centre-right post-democratic new capitalist political party in demonstrating the party’s inherent firm based networking character. According to Crouch, Forza Italia’s roots stem from interests voiced by both financial and political elites. Apart from the party’s top-down implementation, Crouch also notes a personal cult surrounding the party’s leadership. This is for Crouch another characteristic of the post-democratic party. However, Crouch (2004, p. 75) then goes on to declare that our time is not yet ready for the solely network based party type: with years passing, the once post-democratic features slowly vanished and the party transformed into a somewhat more ‘classical’ party in the traditional meaning: this change is seen by the expanding voluntary groups based at local levels contributing to Forza Italia’s success. Crouch attributes this change to the importance of Italian local government. Nevertheless, he notes the role played by the former Italian Prime Minister S. Berlusconi and former head of the party in downplaying the significance of local elections. National politics almost absorbed local politics which could have further encouraged disengagement as well as political confusion/tiredness in the local electorate.

The comparison between New Labour and its Italian centre-right counterpart is based on their shared reliance of economic agents as members: the British socialist party tries to win over corporate firms with the prospect of financial support and binding contracts for purchased services while party affiliation based on mass membership and trade unions falls away (Crouch, 2004, p. 76). The increasing cost of electoral campaigns, including mass media representations and professional services, pressurize the party to broaden their electoral scope and membership precisely because costs have risen while traditional sources of income have reduced. Nevertheless, relying solely on new elite financial benevolence

without any political affiliation proves to be short-sighted given that the party needs money on an on-going basis. Moreover, these wealthy donators might sponsor the party under the circumstances of the party accepting (political) demands which otherwise would not have appeared on the political agenda. An issue of legitimation arises. This could harm the party by voters turning away. Therefore, it remains crucial for the party to keep traditional political voters for two reasons: financing and legitimating. This double practice in securing funds points towards tensions.

## **2.2 THREE VISIONS ON BLAIR'S PRIME MINISTERSHIP FROM 1997 UNTIL 2007**

### **a) New Labour as a Novel Party Discarding its Socialist Past**

Crouch is joined in his perception of New Labour under the leadership of A. Blair as a post-democratic centre-left party by A. Applebaum (1997). She claims that "the British Labour Party was genuinely socialist. Its members believed in a planned economy and nationalized industry, preferred state housing projects to private developments, and thought a "fair" society could be created with taxes as high as 90 percent of income..." (Applebaum, 1997, p. 46). With the victory of New Labour in the 1997 general election headed by Blair, a new era began discarding the party's commitment to its former goals, among them socialism. Applebaum provides as proof of the New Labour era by the following facts: first, Blair's expressed admiration for Thatcher in renewing her party published in the conservative newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* (1997, p. 46); second, the abandonment of the socialist cornerstone, Clause IV, that aimed at "securing for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution [...] that maybe possible, upon the basis of common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange." (1997, p. 47); third, the declaration made by the chancellor of exchequer and future Prime Minister G. Brown to keep the same level as the previous Conservative government of personal income tax as well as of public spending during the general election campaign give an impression of Conservative policies' continuation and endorsement by New Labour (1997, p. 47); fourth, the cutting down on the Welfare State, see the right to public housing (1997, p. 47).

Applebaum also paints another picture of Blair: one of a politician who presses ahead pragmatically with policy proposals. This surging ahead gives an impression of indiscretion as potential policies are dropped as soon as they encounter criticism. The example of Blair's

envisaged stakeholder economy illustrates well this mechanism: in 1996 while visiting Singapore, Blair made a eulogy with respect to the Asian Tigers' economic success and values besides voicing his wish to transpose the Asian Tiger's economic regime onto the British economy: "The creation of an economy where we are inventing and producing goods and services of quality needs the engagement of the whole country. It must be a matter of national purpose and national pride ... The economics of the centre and centre-left today should be geared to the creation of the stakeholder economy which involves all our people, not a privileged few." (Blair, 1996, cited in Applebaum, 1997, p. 49). Blair further elaborated his conception of stakeholder economy by pointing to the empowerment of the individual, the opportunity to develop oneself and therefore support the national development as well as the involvement of a wide range of people in opposition to only a few. Because of criticism from the Conservative party and little support from his own party, the supposedly umbrella concept was soon dropped.

Another point noted by Applebaum with respect to Blair is the politician's employed semantics that positioned him close to the Conservative party. His emphasis on responsibility and duty, his open discussions on the deteriorating situation of public housing, his denouncement of antisocial behaviour, see his statement regarding hardly ever donating money to mendicants, all these different statements establish for Applebaum (1997, p. 51) Blair's sympathy for Conservative policies.

To nuance Applebaum's view first referring back to the before mentioned historic convergence of British left and right political ideologies and parties embodied in Butskellism show that Blair's display of sympathy and rapprochement are neither unique nor new.

#### **b) A Nuanced Account of Blair's New Labour Government**

J. Gray (2004) sees Blair's government in retrospect as comprehensive with respect to the irreversibility of Thatcher's economic policies. Although Gray's opinion on New Labour appears at first sight reminiscent of Applebaum's view, their opinions differ. Gray maintains that Blair envisaged a more inclusive version of Thatcher's economic regime, one that sought to combine social cohesion and fairness by means of the free-market (Gray, 2004, p. 39). From this standpoint it is possible to argue that New Labour disrespected its past by endorsing the inherited conservative economic regime. However, Blair developed the inherited system even further driving conservative claims away. The development of the system translated into neo-liberal aims of modernization in both social and economic spheres:



the public sector experienced the infiltration of a market mentality, especially with respect to health, justice and education. The neo-liberal model transformed formerly independent social institutions into firm like institutions featuring a high level of bureaucracy. Gray (2004, p. 39) also denotes that the destructive character of the policies pursued along with the decision to support the United States of America in their Iraq intervention eventually soured and, perhaps, even foreshortened Blair's term as Prime Minister. The parallel between Thatcher's and Blair's career end could not be more striking: Thatcher's victory and stamina as Prime Minister stems from the Labour party's internal conflict provoking the secession and emergence of the Social Democrats. By the same token, Gray (2004, p. 40) claims that the New Labour government could not have remained in power from May 1997 to May 2010 without Thatcher's destructive consequences for her own party.

Gray (2004, p. 42) joins Applebaum (1997, p. 48/9) in her opinion regarding Blair's lack of defined ideology. Concepts such as transcending the left-right dichotomy were thrown into political discussions as much as the adoption of Clinton's mechanism of triangulation (Third Way). The implicit emphasis on centralization that accounts for a core element of Thatcherite politics as well as the urge to control the media also were topic of discussion without yielding results. Nevertheless, some policies can be detected as genuinely novel although if not all of them originated from Blair: "the devolution of power to Scotland was a commitment going back to the time of John Smith. Transferring the authority to set interest rates to an independent committee of the Bank of England was a historic act and a politically shrewd move, but it emanated from the office of Gordon Brown." (Gray, 2004, p. 44).

Overall, Gray provides a mixed account regarding Blair's rule with the negative characteristics dominating. On the one hand, the Conservative legacy in economics could neither be overlooked nor be reversed. Besides accepting and embracing the Tory legacy, Blair added some leftist elements such as social cohesion and equality on top (Gray, 2004, p. 39). On the other hand, Blair took Thatcher's economic policies to an even further level by deregulating the postal services and commercializing the National Health Service (Gray, 2004, p. 43).

Moreover, Blair can be qualified as a post-modern Prime Minister. Features of this qualification centre on the abrogation between reality and presentation. The special usage of media was not only confined to his person and government, but also aimed at providing a young and fresh image of the British nation. The image of a rejuvenated country was advanced by "his [Blair's] early alliance with popular musicians, his involvement in the

Greenwich Dome and his response to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales...” (Gray, 2004, p. 45). It seems as if Blair intended to change society by changing society’s self-perception in the media. The advent of mass media ushered the displacement of beliefs and turned into a new opportunity for the government to both exercise and fuel its power. Blair acknowledged mass media as a tool that allowed the shaping of public perceptions (2004, p. 45).

The most important aspect to note in Gray’s account of Blair’s rule is the frequent reference to Neo-liberalism in relation to New Labour: “his recurrent genuflection to a defunct One Nation Tory tradition and his intermittent allusions to the Third Way, a neo-liberal model of modernization underpins all of his economic and social policies” (2004, p. 39), “Neo-liberal ideology was undoubtedly important in the intellectual formation of New Labour...” (2004, p. 43), “The pervasive influence of neoliberal ideas in the 1990s shaped the New Labour world-view. New Labour was founded in the neo-liberal belief that only one economic system could deliver prosperity...” (2004, p.42), “new policies were needed that reflected a world very different from that which existed when Labour was last in power. Its weakness was its assumption-which it took from neo-liberal ideology-that capitalism had overcome its propensity to periodic crisis.” (2004, p.43). Without explaining anew the neo-liberal system, see for explanation Chapter two, it is necessary to inquire whether Crouch does not contradict himself in his theory of post-democracy. Given that the prevailing post-democratic regime is supposedly privatized Keynesianism, the fact that New Labour relied on Neo-liberalism for its economic goals which even impacted on its party structure, for example the adherence of experts and lobbyists moving from enterprises to the party, is surprising and points to the two names (privatized Keynesianism and Neo-liberalism) for the same deregulated free market both of which have the same illusion as the state has to bail them out in the end. Following Crouch’s account of post-democracy, privatized Keynesianism prevails in the economic sphere while Neo-liberalism characterizes the political spheres. Indeed, the repercussions of Neo-liberalism in politics have been widely discussed (Desch, 2007/8; Orgad, 2010; Robison, 2006). Wolin (2003) sums up the most significant consequence of Neo-liberalism: ‘inverted totalitarianism’. He understands by the concept of ‘inverted totalitarianism’ “that while the current system and its operatives share with Nazism the aspiration toward unlimited power and aggressive expansionism, their methods and actions seem upside down. For example, in Weimar Germany, before the Nazis took power, the "streets" were dominated by totalitarian-oriented gangs of toughs, and whatever there was of democracy was confined to the government. In the United States,

however, it is the streets where democracy is most alive--while the real danger lies with an increasingly unbridled government.” (2003, p. 1).

In order for this system to exist, the legislative system is the victim of repression while being submissive to the state, the legislature has no power and merely serves for appearance. The party system paves the way for a the corporate elite to take over the political sphere while the poor segment of the citizenry experiences apathy and hopelessness in comparison to the middle class which dreads unemployment and hopes for financial rewards as soon as economic activity takes off again (Wolin, 2003). In the ‘inverted totalitarian system’, corporate firms fund research and projects at universities, think tanks turn into propaganda agents and the media advance the political system.

Wolin’s account of ‘inverted totalitarianism’ exhibits similarities with Crouch’s post-democracy, in the role of the media, the apathy of the citizenry and the existence of spectacular politics. Neo-liberalism belongs as much for Crouch as for Wolin in the political sphere, wherewith privatized Keynesianism is confined to the economic sphere. Privatized Keynesianism is deregulated lending by private banks to private citizens so is a form of neo-liberal practice at least until private banks go bankrupt and need to be bailed out by the state. Therefore, privatized Keynesianism is a form of Neo-liberalism. Crouch is right with respect to the continued importance of state-based Keynesianism it is when the state re-floats the market whilst claiming to be fostering a free market that the political ideology of Neo-liberalism is at odds with the economic reality of state Keynesian management.

### **c) Putting into Perspective New Labour’s ‘Innovativeness’**

R. Toye (2004) captures New Labour’s innovativeness and uniqueness in the most nuanced way. Generally, it is assumed that New Labour is a renewal of the ‘old’ Labour party sharing little in common. Crouch (2004), Applebaum (1997), Gray (2004) and Bevir (2003) endorse this view. Bevir (2003, p. 456) distinguishes New Labour for its ideological eclecticism in bringing Neo-liberalism, a conservative mind-set, and Institutionalism, a more social mind-set, together. The two-level neo-liberal ideology indicates “another significant similarity between New Labour and the New Right [that] lies in their overlapping rejections of the bureaucratic hierarchies associated with Old Labour” (2003, p. 463). Bevir does not tire of pointing out in the same tone as the previous scholars that “New Labour uses institutionalism and network theory to create an alternative to...Old Labour” (2003, p. 466) by “construct[ing] the dilemmas facing the state in a way that points to rejection of Old

Labour and the New Right and affirmation of social embeddedness, partnership, networks, and trust.” (2003, p. 469). The adjective ‘New’ in front of the Labour party seems to seal its fate not only a neologism but also as a party with little bonds to the former/past Labour party.

Toye discards this opinion from the outset by first investigating the party history of Labour, second by analysing 1997 New Labour’s party members and political decisions. Toye distinguishes between two sorts of critiques: one side that claims that New Labour does not cherish its history, the other one is more optimistic in scrutinizing the party by declaring that core values still remain present in New Labour. Toye (2004) joins Fielding (2003) in assessing New Labour’s novelty. Fielding claims that Blair respected and showed attachment to his party’s past even if the social democratic foundation shrunk over time (2004, p. 3). New Labour embracement of capitalism stems from a desire to change the existing system for the better so the majority of people can profit from capitalism.

The most important claim by Toye (2004, p. 371) centres on New Labour not replacing Old Labour but having co-existed with it for a long time. The ‘core values’ argument intends to prove New Labour’s connection to its past. First, to frame the core value argumentation, Toye states that New Labour was aware of its party history: in fact, G. Brown wrote his PhD on the Labour party history and published it. In 1995 Brown and Wright published together a collection on socialist writings while Blair aimed at appearing as someone from the Labour’s past (2004, p. 373). In order to further exhibit the connection to the past, Blair modelled himself on the academic and MP D. Marquand in articulating his vision of the Labour party. Marquand claimed that the party’s decay was due to its incapacity “to construct an enduring Labour-led equivalent of the heterogeneous, ramshackle, but extraordinarily successful progressive coalition which the Liberals led before the First World War” (Marquand, 1991/2, p. ix, cited in Toye, 2004, p. 373). Therefore, the genuinely inherent socialist character of the Labour party can be called into question right from the party’s beginning.

Regarding the core value argument, Toye claims that the objectives of New Labour reflect the goals of the Labour party. It is merely the ways in which the stipulated goals are to be fulfilled that have changed. Moreover, Clause IV was considered a cornerstone of the Labour party programme. However, the Labour party’s historic approach to nationalization was as sober as it was pragmatic. Nationalization did not occur as a mass phenomenon, but in a considered manner. Clause IV was never completely implemented, nor even seriously

attempted, and Labour's endorsement of this programme was always less than its critics expected (Toye, 2004, p. 375).

Marquand's quote and the fact of Clause IV being implemented to a lesser extent than anticipated sheds a new light on the Labour party. The Labour party was not as socialist as critics like Applebaum supposed. Moreover, the endorsement by Attlee's government of both Keynes and Beveridge, who saw themselves as Liberals, demonstrates Labour's primary sympathy for liberal ideas (Toye, 2004, p. 375). From this perspective, Blair's endorsement of (Neo-)liberalism is not new for the Labour party.

Blair's social justice programme remained the same as under Labour. In fact, Toye declares that New Labour policies turned out to be even more contentious regarding the funding of public services and the advantages of public spending. Still, Toye (2004, p. 375) claims that New Labour's attitude vis-à-vis equality and poverty can be set equal to present European social democrats and to the historical British Labour party.

The novelty of New Labour does not reside in their support for the market. In fact, former Labour members such as J. A. Hobson and Neil Thompson already spoke out in favour of market principles in the 1920s. Although, public service reforms and privatization reached a new stage under the Blair government as it has been shown before. An important point to note is that during the Attlee government, over 80% of the economy belonged to the private sector, while merely 20% were nationalized (2004, 381).

According to Toye, New Labour existed along Old Labour for a long time and only rose to its recent prominence following four successive Tory general election victories and despair within the Labour party: "in a very real sense there has always been Old and New Labour...What is new in new Labour is that the forces of Old Labour are so weak. It is the dominance and self-confidence of the modernizers, not their novelty, which distinguishes the Blair party from its predecessors" (Coates, 1996, cited in Toye, 2004, p. 385). Blair's government emerged from a shift of balance inside the Labour party and cannot be attributed of having undergone a total ideological transformation.

## **2.3 THE GLOBAL FIRM IN POST-DEMOCRACY**

### **a) Crouch's Account of the Global Firm**

The key institution behind Crouch's account of post-democracy is the global firm. The increasing importance of the enterprise as a model as well as an institution have been

acknowledged by Crouch. He writes about the ramifications of the firm's ascent that: "the rising political importance of the global firm, the vacuum left by the decline of the working class, and the way in which a new political class of political advisers and business lobbyists was filling the vacuum all helped explain why governments social policy was becoming increasingly obsessed with giving work to private contractors" (Crouch, 2004, p. x). His wife's profession and working environment as a senior education officer lead Crouch to declare that "I observed the pressure being increasingly placed by central government on her [his wife] and her colleagues throughout the country to offer aspects of their work and that of schools to private firms and to change the way in which public education services were conceived and structured so that they could easily be transferred to such firms – indeed, so that they would be more logically operated by firms than by public authorities." (2004, p. ix). The political Left parties appear to have missed out on recognizing this development "For most of the twentieth century the European left completely failed to appreciate the significance of the firm as an institution." (2004, p. 31).

The predominant role of the firm has been noted as well by Kalev (2011), who makes similar claims to Crouch's regarding the dominant character of the firm in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This preponderance emerged in the second half of the last century due to mass consumerism during the heyday of macro-economic policies embodied by Keynesian economics (Crouch, 2004, p. 31). Given that most people considered the firm as "a convenient milk-cow" (2004, p. 31), paving the way for the firm to behave to its liking is not surprising: "In some ways this suited the firms themselves: in setting a context of economic stability and not becoming involved in the fine details of what firms did, governments did not intervene much in their affairs." (2004, p. 31). With the breakdown of Keynesianism, neo-liberal ideology took over as the new model to be adhered to in economics by implementing micro-economics. From this adjustment in policy derived rapid changes in technology as well as innovation by ignoring the gradual problems posed by the firm. Demands emanating from consumers and global competition reached new heights, transforming the key institution into a "robust and demanding creature" (Crouch, 2004, p.32). The government experienced this tenaciousness as did the work force. Ascending to such behaviour and position, enables the firm to threaten government with delocalization besides repeatedly influencing decisions vis-à-vis the labour and the taxation regime. Hence, changes in policies can be partly traced back to impulses from the firm which are revealed to be "...far more effectively than" impulses from "its

nominal citizens, even if they [firms] do not live there, have formal citizen rights there, or pay taxes.” (2004, p. 32).

Crouch (2004, p. 33) compares the present situation to pre-revolutionary France with respect to power and taxation: today, as then, it appeared to be legitimate that a small fraction of the population, the elite and respectively the aristocracy, enjoyed monopolized power without any constraints, while lower classes, i.e. the middle classes and peasantry respectively, had to pay taxes.

In order to become and/or remain attractive for the firm, the government and political parties make citizens aware of the dysfunctional work system along with the related labour rights by emphasizing the urgent need to alter both the system and rights (2004, p. 33). The citizenry then actively votes for deregulation. Another means to attract firms is diminished corporation taxes, which again gets back to the citizens. Because of the lack of revenue received by the government, citizens subsequently face even higher taxes. Again, a vicious circle begins as the following election will probably be won by the party proposing the largest tax cuts, wherewith the deterioration of public services only becomes a question of time (2004, p. 33).

Crouch (2004, p. 36) defines the two main characteristics of the firm that foster its phantom-like existence: first, the replacement of the Japanese model of production by the Anglo-American model allowing the firm’s identity to alter rapidly; second, the rise in casualization with respect to the work force. Regarding the first point, the Anglo-American model differentiates itself from the predecessor by no longer exhibiting a ‘whole company approach’. Crouch understands this approach as “shaping everything about them [the firms] for targeted pursuit of competitive success. In particular, the personalities of their employees and the quality of their loyalty to the organization were to be fashioned according to a central plan. [...] For many firms this became an argument why they should not allow external trade unions to represent their workers, or employees’ association to represent their own interests in collective bargaining, or even trade associations their more technical and marketing interests. They had to be free to act and lobby for themselves. This helped set the stage of the new prominence of the individual firm...” (2004, p. 35/6).

Bearing in mind that different asset holders own a firm and that varying combination of workers work for the enterprise, the envisaged invisibility becomes true. The latter indeed can be viewed as an effective weapon when accusations arise. Nevertheless, eloping is not as

easy: the identity of corporate wealth owners' change more slowly than ever before; still, the new ethos of the firm is unchallenged (2004, p.38).

The individual firm, although remaining global in its scope, continuously reinvents itself due to company take-over, mergers or simple reorganization of the enterprise. These changes respond to the requirement of flexibility stemming from the consequences of financial deregulation: uncertainty of markets, the increase in shareholder value as well as the predominant centralized role of stock exchanges (2004, p. 36). In order to remain competitive and respond to these new challenges, casualization of the work force ensues given that economic activities change rapidly. Casualization contributes to the labours force's short-term and/or casual employment whereby uncertainties originating from the market can be easily dealt with due to the high amount of flexibility. The main tool to enforce such a mode of production is sub-contracting and out-sourcing. The firm's new goal no longer centres on providing good quality products but on constructing interdependence between images, publicity, brands and concepts (2004, p. 37).

The actual goal behind the global firm is "to locate itself primarily in the financial sector, because this is where capital is at its [most] mobile, and to sub-contract everything else it does to small, insecure units." (2004, p. 37). By doing so, the firm is liberated from any managerial tasks, providing the freedom to focus exclusively on brands, and concepts, as explained before. Crouch worries about this development as well as regarding fusions given that "the phantom character of firms which constitute temporary, anonymous financial accumulations for the electronic co-ordination of a mass [of] disaggregated activities, lead many commentators to see here the final dissolution of capital as a socio-political category, a major stage in the end of the class division of old industrial society [...] The early twenty-first century firm can thus seem a weaker institution than its predecessors: no longer the solid organization with a large headquarters building and strong presence, but a soft, flexible, constantly changing will of the wisp." (2004, p. 37/8).

Two important aspects from the last quote have to be noted: first, that with the rise of the global and individual firm, the traditional class structure of society appears to fall away; second, that the firm currently is less 'present' in a physical manner than might be expected (hard power), albeit its influence cannot be overlooked (soft power). Regarding the first point, Crouch declares that one of the symptoms of his theory is the falling away of social class consciousness due to technological innovativeness during the 1990s that lead to the abandonment of industrialism. Previously, industrialism had replaced agricultural activity



(2004, p. 55). The traditional British working force experienced a particular rough end that is to say a triple crisis: “particular rapid deindustrialization resulting from the weakness of the country’s industrial base; profound conflict within the Labour Party; and a disastrous organized coal-mining strike” (2004, p. 55/6). Concerning the second point, the firm not only gains prominence in the economic sphere, but also as an institutional model to be followed by governments. By adhering to a firm-like institutional model, the lines between the commercial/economic supply executed by the government and the need of universal access to public services are annihilated (2004, p. 40). Ensuing from the blurred distinction between commercial supply and the universal access to public services, the government further loses faith in its handling of public services and turns to the private sector in search of sub-contracting consultants. Neo-liberal ideology slowly creeps into the government, which consequently aims at providing the highest level of freedom to the sub-contracted firm. This move (un)consciously further assimilates the government to the functioning of an enterprise and contributes to the corporate elite’s seizing of political power. Leaving the firm taking care of the government’s organization, Crouch even goes so far as to acknowledge the government’s diminished confidence vis-à-vis the firm (2004, p. 41). Crouch depicts this development as follows: “Government becomes a kind of institutional idiot, its every-ill-informed move being anticipated in advance and therefore discounted by smart market actors.” (2004, p. 41).

The infiltrated market mode of thinking of the government resulting from the emergence of a corporate elite is another aspect of Crouch’s (2004, p. 51) declared parabola: the re-emergence of the corporate political privileged class in a time of Neo-liberalism only can occur where the private and public interests have become one. Differential access to politics is a milestone on the way to post-democracy. The rise of the corporate elite cannot co-exist with an agile, creative democracy as the former aims at silencing egalitarian demands (2004, p. 52).

The media corporation especially deserves to be investigated because of its contribution in diminishing choices of available information and downgrading the quality of employed political semantics as well as of communication (2004, p. 46). These three aspects count as major indicators of democracy’s poor health. With the ascending incorporation of the press, the radio and television into the commercial part of society, the information delivered comes to be modelled on a particular kind of marketable product (2004, p. 46). Moreover, with the expansion of the commercial sector people’s attention becomes even

more superficial due to the sheer amount of information available. Catching one's attention is a challenge resulting in both the degrading of quality and the sensationalisation of news. From this development, the citizenry transforms into an incompetent political actor (2004, p. 47). Crouch notes that "The commercial model is therefore triumphing over other concepts of mass political communication. Politics and other types of news have been increasingly redefined as items of very short-term consumer spending. The consumer has triumphed over the citizen." (2004, p. 49).

Crouch discloses one more fact of contention vis-à-vis the role performed by the media, press, television and radio: their ownership. A small group of people and corporations own most of the media. In the case of the United Kingdom, "(News Corporation) is a satellite television monopolist (BSkyB), owns newspapers as diverse as *The Times* and *The Sun*, and has interlocking relations with other media providers." (2004, p. 49). Crouch thinks that diversity in the mass media market is only likely to emerge when media provision do not aim at increasing their target audience. Another solution would be to redefine the mass society by different segments and then elaborate programmes according the respective segment's preference (2004, p. 50).

#### **b) Explaining the Rising Influence of the Firm in Politics**

Crouch's perception of economic predominance in politics originates among other factors from the writings of the American scholar Charles E. Lindblom: "Lobbies on behalf of business interests always have an enormous advantage, for two separate reasons. First, as argued convincingly by Lindblom (1977), a disillusioned former celebrator of the US model of pluralism, business interests are able to threaten that, unless governments listen to them, their sector will not be successful, which will in turn jeopardize government's own core concern with economic success. Second, business interests can wield enormous funds for their lobbying, not just because they are rich to start with, but because success of the lobbying will bring increased profits to the business: the lobbying costs constitute investment." (2004, p. 17/8).

In 1977, Lindblom published his book entitled *Politics and Markets: The World's Political-Economic System* dealing with the incompatibility of democracy and the corporate firm. The discrepancy of both institutions results from discretionary power exhibited by the corporate firm in particular and business in general; business's ensuing influence vis-à-vis the state and its magnitude to indoctrinate different segments of society by making society

endorse and hold up business interests. Lindblom's research interests centre on the interplay of the market and democracy, a field which according to the scholar has not been sufficiently investigated (Lindblom, 1995, p. 684). In order to better understand the interaction between the market and democracy, Lindblom provides the following explanations: first, the market represents not only an institution or infrastructure; the market also organizes social coordination involving a vast number of both actions and people requiring a steady level of control. Lindblom claims that "No method or feat or accident of social organization competes with it – it is a class by itself." (1995, p. 684). Another important aspect to note is the scope/extent of the market which remains unchallenged. Within this framework, people endorse the role of being sellers and buyers. The given example of consuming coffee, from its harvest in Columbia to the shipping over to different countries in order to process the beans, package them and put the product in a supermarket to be bought. Comparing by the before mentioned depiction the market and democracy, the market is operating at a global level, while democracy is set predominantly in a national context. Potential adversaries of the global market hardly exist at a comparable global level of coordinated action. In fact, there is no global state, but there exist a few international organizations which could match the market in its global scope.

Lindblom (1995, p. 685) points to the disparity in power between the market (a giant) and the state (a dwarf) embracing democracy. Nevertheless, the absence of a state severely threatens the market's scope for existence, while the state is able to execute tasks without the need of a market system. One of the most significant points in the comparison between the state (democracy) and the market are the different scales of coordination involved. Bearing in mind that exporting democracy became the Leitmotiv of the United States of America following the end of the Cold War; people might be inclined to disagree with Lindblom on this point. According to Freedom House (2012) 152 countries were supposedly democratic in that year to varying degrees. Democracy is globalising but these varying degrees can be seen as proof that democracy is not easily transplantable, or integrated, into a unified global political system.

In another part of Lindblom's investigation of the state and the market, a similarity of both democracy and the market is given: their function to readjust claims bearing conflict potential so as to ensure the peaceful order of society (Lindblom, 1995, p. 685). Market systems in isolation provide peace in the sense of that "no one can effect any increase in personal claims other than through offering someone else a benefit sufficient to induce the

other to grant the claim. Market rules do not permit one simply to appropriate what one wants. Appropriating another person's labour we call slavery, and appropriating assets we call theft." (1995, p. 685). Democracy provides peace by "maintain[ing] popular control over the [...] elites who are authorized to make decisions." (Lindblom, 1995, p. 685).

Democracy's and the market's interdependence has another characteristic: both institutions present "competing and complementary methods of popular control over ... elites" (1995, p. 385). Elites handle the readjustment claims enabling them to make decisions embodied as both business executives and government officials. The task of organizing society is split equally between the two kinds of elite, economic and political elites. Controlling these elites can be done in two different ways: either by casting a vote, or by giving one's vote by buying products. The main difference between these two ways of controlling elites resides in the following fact: in the "market popular controls aim largely at results, at outcomes, while democratic popular controls aim largely at process, at inputs." (1995, p. 686).

Lindblom notes the inequality between the economic and political elites by claiming that the market impacts on democracy more than the other way around. In fact, the market increasingly assumes responsibilities for tasks once executed by the government. These handed over responsibilities can centre on tasks as crucial as wealth and income distribution, which could be used to finance political campaigns and/or to buy votes. Lindblom (1995, p. 686) suggests that democracy can exist without a market system, while regarding the opposite, he raises doubts. Moreover, as both democracy and market are complementary mechanisms of popular control, it is important to investigate whether people would rather endorse one way or another to control the elites.

The subordinated interdependence of democracy within the market has paved the way for a decline in the quality of political discourse. This development contributes to the weakening of popular control over elites (1995, p. 687). Unilateral communication also reaches a new level: "An important supplementary hypothesis is that with the rise of democracy and the decline of undemocratic coercions, elites have become increasingly dependent on controlling minds in order to maintain their elite advantages, thus giving to unilateral communication a central place it never before had as an instrument of social control." (1995, p. 687).

Having elucidated Lindblom's understanding of the market and democracy, the framework for explaining his concept of 'Privileged position of business in Polyarchy' is presented. This concept highlights the dominant influence of business/corporations "tied directly to a widespread and fundamental societal fealty to its core belief system, one rooted in the discursive elements of free market capitalism, private property rights, freedom of individual choice, and minimal government--the language and belief system of the consumer." (Guber and Bosso, 2007, p. 17). Parallel to this development, Lindblom (1977, p. 202) states that the opportunity exists for citizens to become indoctrinated; pushing aside their own will while endorsing business oriented priorities. Because of this appropriation citizens transform into accomplices of businessmen wherewith the privileged position of business becomes accepted. This acceptance means that in the political sphere, business interests do not have to face any struggle in establishing themselves. The limits of this concept come about when the public discourse is no longer subjected to the core values of business (Guber and Bosso, 2007, p. 17).

Public discourse demonstrated the importance of the semantics employed in winning over the citizenry in policy debates. Values such as 'freedom' and 'choice' belong to the rhetoric employed by businesses while advertising campaigns and public relations do not go short of funding thanks to the help of conservative institutions such as the Cato Institute and the American Enterprise Institute (Guber and Bosso, 2007, p. 18).

Lindblom turns out to be as much Crouch's inspirational source as a factor undermining the novelty of Crouch's post-democratic age. In fact, Lindblom already mentioned back in the 1970s the favourite position of business in politics as well as the tensions inherent in the relationship between the market and democracy. Comparing Lindblom's and Crouch's accounts on the tensions between democracy and the market, Crouch does not add new insight in Post-democracy to the already established scenario by Lindblom. However, it has to be said that Crouch goes beyond the political-economic paradigm painted by Lindblom by adding sociological and media aspects. Therefore, the novelty of Post-democracy resides neither in the analysis of the market's relationship to democracy nor in the government copying the functioning of the firm but in the bringing together of different interdisciplinary analyses resulting in post-democracy.

**c) Reasons Why the Firm Threatening the Government Does Not Always Work**

Crouch (2004, p. 34) holds that the government not only imitates the firm in its functioning but also that the firm can dictate the government what to do by using the delocalization threat besides hollowing out the state. This threat however is for several reasons not as powerful as supposed and as portrayed by Crouch. This section reviews two different reasons why this threat does not hold true by focusing on the following economic theories: the sunk cost and the theory of insiders versus outsiders.

*i) The Sunk Cost*

Arguments against the firm's scope to threaten the government with delocalization suggest relocation is more challenging than assumed for the following reasons: first, because of the unprofitable sunk cost; second, due to the economic theory of insiders/outside. First, the sunk cost can be defined as a cost that has already been incurred and which can no more be revoked (Martin, 2002). Once such foundations are 'sunk' a firm can then decide either to continue building the fixed asset which could lead to it regaining this cost, or abandon the project as a whole. The sunk cost in any case causes a dilemma to the firm given that any project already is underway accumulates expenses that can only be redeemed if the project is taken to completion. On the one hand money has already been invested and abandoning the project for good would require to start from scratch with new costs; whilst on the other hand, sticking with initial investments may incur marginal costs greater than would have been incurred if the whole business was relocated (Martin, 2002).

Crouch invokes the concept of sunk cost while speaking of the assumed global/transnational character of firms. He claims that "In reality, not only are many firms far from global, but even transnational giants are constrained by their existing patterns of investment, expertise and networks from skipping around the world in search of the lowest taxes and worst labour conditions. They have what economists call 'sunk cost', which means that moving is costly." (Crouch, 2004, p. 34). Crouch points to the sunk cost as one explicit threat mechanism used by the firm with respect to the government. Such delocalization which came to prominence in 2006 when the European Union Bolkestein Directive made the headlines for the danger of wage dumping. The last sentence points indirectly to the economic theory of insider and outsider (discussed below) increasing the costs of delocalization which may make relocation unprofitable.

*ii) The Theory of Insiders versus Outsiders in Economics*

Closely tied to the discussion of delocalization is the theory of insider-outsider with respect to the production process. This theory “examines the behaviour of economic agents in markets where some participants have more privileged positions than others. Incumbent workers in the labour market, the “insiders,” often enjoy more favourable employment opportunities than the “outsiders.” The reason for this disparity is that firms incur labour turnover costs when they replace insiders by outsiders.” (Lindbeck and Snower, 2001, p. 165).

The last phrase points towards two negative aspects of delocalization: firstly, the need to train ‘outsiders’, that is to say the requirement to train a potential new work force located outside the firm’s mode of production which will involve additional cost for the firm. Although, wage levels as well as labour rights differ from country to country contributing to the firm’s intention to outsource parts of its production to perceived ‘cheaper’ countries, costs of training should not be underestimated. Secondly, setting up new workshops and acquiring the necessary tools for production can also involve more costs than initially expected. Lindbeck and Snower (2001) acknowledge these aspects by declaring that “The most obvious labour turnover costs are the costs of hiring, firing and providing firm-specific training, but further costs can arise from the attempts of insiders to resist competition with outsiders by refusing to cooperate with or harassing outsiders who try to underbid the wages of incumbent workers. Since these costs are borne, at least in part, by the employers, they give the insiders market power. The insiders use this power to push their wages above the market clearing level, but firms do not try to replace them with outsiders since it would be costly to do so. The insider-outsider theory then proceeds to examine the implications of this behaviour for employment and unemployment” (2001, p. 165).

This section has provided reasons why economic pressure of delocalizing a firm’s production to another country does not necessarily threaten the government. Although, other places of production might appear cheaper to firms in terms of production costs, or have more favourable legislation about business, the fact that new workers have to be trained cannot be overlooked as it remains questionable whether initial workers would be willing to move country and to adapt or to cooperate in integrating new production centres. Therefore, new costs arise for the firm which could become a serious cost in delocalizing the production.

#### **d) Applying Crouch’s Model of the Firm to Contemporary Politics**

The firm not only poses a danger to the government, but also to democracy. The danger faced by the state revolves around the privatization and contracting out of state functions, while media corporations threaten democracy. This threat emanating from media corporation is about favouring one candidate in comparison to others not due to his political expertise but due to his/her glossy appeal, for example managerial skills, slick appearance and advertising like eloquence, enabling him/her to gain votes within narrowly constrained policy limits. Political ideology is replaced by this glossy attraction. The enchanted citizenry then merely observes political and electoral spectacles. Moreover, the fact that media corporations are held in few hands also increases the ease by which newspapers and journal can be used for manipulating the mass to enforce the will of the people running the media who are often associated with the elite. The following section provides the example of the former Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi also counts as one of the most important shareholders of Mediaset, the most powerful national mass media firm. The following section addresses the threats posed by Berlusconi to Italian democracy.

i) *Media Corporations and Electoral Campaigns: Berlusconi as a Threat to Italian Democracy*

F. Duve, for whom media independence from government amounts as the cornerstone of any parliamentary-democratic regime, already noted in 2001 that media corporation threatened the Italian democratic system. The representative of the Freedom of the Media committee for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe declared that in Italy Berlusconi's political ascent threatened the clear distinction of powers between the media and the government (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2001). He further asked Berlusconi to draw a clear line between Mediasete, Berlusconi's media corporation, and tasks that needed to be executed by the government. If the lines were indistinguishable, journalists would no longer be able to openly criticise government executives and the Prime Minister (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2001).

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided accounts of the development of political parties and the global firm in post-democracy. Crouch blames the move from Keynesianism to Neo-liberalism as much as the takeover of politics by the global firm for the undermining of national political parties. Applebaum (1997) joins Crouch in his denunciation of New



Labour's economic direction while maintaining that no clear break between Blair's party and its conservative predecessor is perceptible. However, a discontinuity between Labour and New Labour is perceptible according to Applebaum (1997). Gray (2004) takes a more nuanced view of whether New Labour is all that new. In fact, he declares that similarities between Blair's and Thatcher's policies are visible although the former New Labour Prime Minister added a gloss of equality and social cohesion on top of Thatcherite inegalitarian policies. Toye (2004) holds the most nuanced opinion when compared to Crouch's outline of New Labour's departure from the older Labour party's character. Toye draws attention to the fact that 'New' Labour and Labour co-existed as streams within one and the same political party. Indeed, both streams even share the same goal but intend to reach them through distinct channels.

Crouch's account of the global firm portrays the former as an avaricious, manipulative institution which subjugates the political system and its actors to its powers. By hollowing out political parties the firm can shape the policy framework to its liking. By doing so, the public sector loses ground while the private sector sub-contracts services once carried out by the state. Crouch's analysis might be for some readers reminiscent of Charles E. Lindblom's (1977) favoured position of business in politics in the United States. Lindblom points to the dialectic running through the relationship between democracy and the market which seems even more prominent and widespread nowadays. Perhaps what Crouch calls Post-democracy is just an 'Americanization', the transition from social democrats to corporate dominated politics. However, see chapter two where it is noted that the state is not totally powerless and hollowed out. Two reasons were given as to why outsourcing of jobs to cheaper labour markets abroad should not work as a means of threatening the government: the sunk cost, and the insider versus outsider theory in economics that states and politicians collude with the global firm in as much from internal cooption as external threat.

### CHAPTER 3: BAUMIER'S POST-DEMOCRACY

Following Crouch's account of post-democracy, the chapter deals with Baumier's vision regarding the object in question. In retrospect, post-democracy seems for Crouch to amount to spectacular politics where the government no longer assumes its functions by ceding them to the firm. Within this context, the state needs to contract out its services to the private sector and, subsequently, not only loses its former capacities but also its confidence. This situation is reflected within the citizenry. The takeover by the firm of the state is paralleled by the infiltration of economic agents, such as business advisors, into political parties. As such, political parties in turn become advocates of economic goals; no longer displaying any political ideological programme. Politicians support political parties by appealing to the citizenry thanks to their managerial like appearance and ideologically void programmes while advancing elite economic goals. In sum, Crouch sees post-democracy as a mismatch between economics (capitalism) and politics (democracy) with distinct sociological and media characteristics.

Baumier is the author of novels and of essays, the best known being *L'anti-Traité d'athéologie: le système Onfray mis à nu* (in English this is *The anti-Treaty of atheology: the Onfray system exposed*) published by Presse de la Renaissance in 2005. Baumier also acts as a literary critic collaborating with diverse review journals such as *La Revue des Deux Mondes* and *La Sœur de l'Ange*. The reader of Baumier's book has an idea in which period post-democracy occurs according to Baumier; "With the fall of the Berlin wall, a chapter of your history ended and another one began. Post-communism generated post-democracy, in which formal democracy replaces real democracy." (Baumier, 2007). The consequences of post-democracy are the following: 1) the role of spontaneous media in 'derealizing' reality by portraying real facts as inventions; 2) the disrespect for the rule of law as well as the incorrect counter posing of the notions of freedom and rights (the incorrect exchange of freedoms versus rights); 3) spectacular politics and the all-encompassing character of left ideology in French society; and, 4) the belief held by the French mass with respect to the superiority of radical democracy in comparison to liberal democracy. These characteristics are just the most significant of many. I chose these characteristics as they are the most relevant in understanding Baumier's post-democracy thesis.

Baumier states already in the title of his book, *The Totalitarian Democracy: Thinking the post-democratic Modernity*, that his conception of post-democracy is related to

totalitarianism as well as being anchored in a particular period of time, modernity. Baumier divides his book into two parts entitled respectively 'Post-democracy inverts the real world' and 'Post-democracy inverts the true side of the human being'. These parts consist in turn of four and three chapters.

Baumier begins the first part with a baseline study of the French democratic situation in 2007. Throughout the first part of the book, Baumier (2007, p. 19) outlines what he sees as the illusions from which the French citizenry suffer. In the context of these illusions, left ideology takes a central role as it supposedly upholds two key illusions: first, by making people believe that they live in a liberal and representative democracy; second, by proclaiming that radical and social democracy is a better option to the existing democratic system. In the following chapters comprising the first part, Baumier (2007, p. 53) evokes the deterioration of the traditional composition of family. As the people no longer live in close contact, individualism comes about. With the demise of solidarity and the rise in individualism, the common good comes under threat. He (2007, p. 59) then continues to paint the post-democratic scenario by evoking the complicit role played by the media with respect to the oligarchy's post-democratic project. Following these analyses, Baumier (2007, p. 119) claims that war, which repeatedly occurs unnoticed in Western societies, should be understood as the elimination of difference. The elimination of difference results in the diffusion of a unique thought, which in turn is supported by the spontaneous ideology of the media (2007, p. 149). This ideology is "based on the fact that media actors belong to the same media networks, attended the same schools, learn and speak the same language, share the same interests ... This is a very small world, closely linked to the political and industrial/economic spheres. What ties them together? A community with shared interests, which do not need to be formalized, nor verbalized ..." (Baumier, 2007, p. 149). Bearing in mind the shared characteristics between media actors and their close relation with both political and economic spheres, Baumier deduces that politics and economics are very likely to influence the way in which news are reported.

Baumier's vision of post-democracy encompasses a wider array of topics, notably religion, philosophy, media, politics, and psychology. As such it is possible to note that Baumier engages with different themes to define post-democracy. The quantity of themes however does not reflect the quality and the validity of his argument. In order to assess Baumier's post-democratic argument, chapter three deals with the constituent elements of Baumier's post-democracy for subsequently scrutinizing his initial idea of democracy.

Chapter three also addresses the mechanisms conducive to the post-democratic development to then critically assessing them.

According to Baumier, the post-democratic state displays diverse characteristics. These features touch upon many disciplines, such as politics, law, sociology, religion and to a lesser extent economics. His main focus in post-democracy lies in politics, sociology as well as psychology and, finally, religion which appears as the remedy to the post-democratic condition. Baumier's account reflects above all his emotional opinion and vision of the development of democracy and modernity since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Baumier's qualitative reflections do not go further than a depiction of his conservative opinion on events and developments.

The first part of this chapter discloses several main elements of Baumier's post-democratic order such as the illusion held by the French citizenry to be living in an Aronian moment of democracy, the belief in radical democracy as betterment of Aronian democracy and the hostage taking of the French state by left political parties and movements. The second part of the chapter aims at scrutinizing Baumier's idea of post-democracy by looking at whether political identification in France is ideology or party driven before investigation political left and right affiliation and class consciousness in France.

### **3.1 FEATURES OF POST-DEMOCRACY AS UNDERSTOOD BY BAUMIER**

#### **a) Illusions Encountered by the French Public Leading to Post-democracy**

##### *i) The Belief in Embracing the Aronian Moment of Democracy*

Baumier begins by claiming that two illusions administered by the government haunt the French population: first, that the majority of society believes they live in a democratic moment such as was understood by the French historian Raymond Aron, the 'Aronian moment'. Raymond Aron is best known for his book *Democracy and Totalitarianism* published in 1969. The original title in French – *Sociologie des sociétés industrielles, esquisse d'une théorie des régimes politiques* (Paris: Editions Gallimard) was according to the author himself more explicit and accurate (Scott, 2011). In the book, Aron analyses the relationship between (political) parties and regimes with a special attention to democratic and totalitarian regimes. For the purpose of my thesis, Aron's conception of democracy will be explained. Subsequently, I will discuss Baumier's use of Aron's conception of democracy.

To begin with, for Aron democracy amounts to a regime “. . . in which *the peaceful rivalry for the exercise of power exists constitutionally.*” (Aron 1969, p. 41). The democratic idea is understood by Aron as “the dialogue among citizens, the control of the governors by the governed, the opportunity for everyone to be free.” (Aron, 1957, p. 109). The definition provided of democratic regimes and ideas convey a sense of competitiveness as well as idealism. Considering Aron’s definition of democracy and its ideal character, it comes as no surprise that Aron sees constitutional-pluralistic systems as “the moral verity of our time” (1957, p. 109).

Pierce (1963) notes Aron’s preference for calling democratic regimes constitutional-pluralist systems (see definition above). This preference testifies the particular sort of democratic conception: one that consists of several legal parties, “a constitutional organization of the competition and the exercise of power in a legal manner by the victors in the competition.” (Pierce, 1963, p. 27). Pierce (1963) claims that Aron’s conception of democracy is reminiscent of Schumpeter’s idea of democratic regimes, although differences exist between the two scholars’ conceptions. In the introduction of the thesis it was stated that Schumpeter has an elite conception of democracy. Pierce (1963) claims that the key difference between Aron’s and Schumpeter’s ideal democracy is in the way in which competition for political power is decided. Schumpeter sees the popular vote as key determinant of political power, while Aron in contrast does not mind how peaceful competition for political power is conducted nor how political power is exercised.

Aron reveals himself to be skeptical about some democratic procedures and institutions. He sees universal suffrage as “a late and debatable institution of the political order” (1955, p. 269), and attributes to the parliament a jousting character – “parliamentary jousting is one technique, among others, of government by opinion” (1955, p. 269). In fact, electoral competition can take different forms in Aron’s thinking: “the institutions by which the democratic idea is expressed, elections, parliamentary deliberations, the responsibility of the ministers to the elected deputies, are one technique among other possible ones.” (1957, p. 109).

Aron’s qualification of democratic procedures and institutions comes across as skeptical, if not even cynical, in the light of the idea of democracy allegedly being more fundamental for Aron than processes and institutions that breathe life into and actually realize the democratic idea (Pierce, 1963). Pierce (1963) explains Aron’s disregard of democratic

procedures and institutions by the fact that he believes any existing procedures and institutions will reflect democratic values if such values are dominant at the level of social consciousness within a constitutional-pluralistic system. The democratic will of the people prevails by the force of their will, which shapes how institutions function not vice versa. In sum, the following characteristics of Aron's constitutional-pluralist regime can be enumerated: first, its reliance on multiple parties; second, legitimation of the system is gained by electoral competition; third, the system follows the principle of respecting legality while maintain a sense of compromise; and fourth, the civil society living under such a regime is both heterogeneous and organized into groups (Scott, 2011). Examples of constitutional-pluralist systems would be both presidential and Western parliamentary systems (Scott, 2011). Yet, for Aron democracy lies in the will and consciousness of the people, not in institutional arrangements as such.

Pierce (1963) discerns both advantages and disadvantages in Aron's two fold definition of democracy. On the one hand, the flexible character of Aron's democratic setting allows constant reforms and improvement of the constitutional-pluralistic order due to the system's lack of fixity. On the other hand, the several separable parts of Aron's democracy result in each part's lack of capacity in standing alone. In order to understand Aron's democracy, all parts have to be present. Moreover, a fragmented definition runs the risk of one element being overemphasized to the detriment of the others and therefore of the overall definition of democracy (Pierce, 1963). Another disadvantage is Aron's lack of preciseness in how competition for political power in a constitutional-pluralist system can be peaceful and how the rulers this particular system should be elected.

Aron's work has to be seen a defence of both liberal political freedom and democratic pluralism (Scott, 2011). For Aron, liberalism "participates in the enterprise of the new Prometheus; he strives to act accordingly to the lessons, however, uncertain, of historical experience, in conformity with the partial truth he assembles rather than by reference to a falsely total vision" (Aron, 1984, p., 81/2).

Baumier repeatedly asserts the illusion of the 'Aronian democratic moment' he claims the French public believes they live in. Nonetheless, Baumier does not explain what he understands by the 'Aronian moment of democracy'. As previously stated, the 'Aronian moment of democracy' amounts to democracy as the will of the people despite the democratic limits of institutions. For Baumier the illusion lies in this belief today; where he

believes institutions have been fully post-democratized whilst the population remains comfortably deluded.

Another point worthy to notice is Baumier's choice to use Aron's political sociology. Aron's political sociology – his attempt to explain the degeneration of democratic regimes – seems in line with leftist scholars such as Crouch (1999; 2001; 2004), Marquand (2004) and du Gay (2002) (Scott, 2011), but this is not fully true. Whilst left critics see democracy undone by capitalist forces, for Aron it was technocratic managers who were replacing the people with industrial rationality. For Baumier, the European Union is this 'technocratic' threat hiding beneath the illusion of popular will.

The second illusion, held by the radical left, is that to cure liberal and representative democracy's deficiencies requires a social or radical extension of democratic principles. Because Baumier (2007, p. 20) thinks liberal and representative democracy already has ceased to exist, any social change could only be executed by elites as the democratic base of society has dried up. Aron's conception of democracy dates back to the Cold War era and "[...] does not define itself in political terms that is to say as a type of regime, but rather as a state of society. Therefore, democracy is not a way of governance." (Baumier, 2007, p. 35). In Baumier's understanding, the Aronian moment of democracy can be betokened as liberal in the sense of asserting personal liberties based on a representative regime and aiming at formal equality and not egalitarianism of condition. Speaking of liberties, Aron refrains from stating a unique formula for freedom, as in his view no such exclusiveness exists (Aron, 1998, cited in Baumier, 2007, p. 36).

## **b) Radical Democracy as Betterment of Aronian Democracy**

### *i) The Exchangeability of Freedom and Rights*

Another confusion enacted by the post-democratic state on its citizenry is, according to Baumier, the exchangeability of the principle of freedom and the principle of equality. This confusion stems from and has been appropriated by the French political Left. The French political Left sees radical democracy as the betterment of the democratic Aronian moment. Baumier (2007, p. 25) highlights his encountered problems with leftist organisations such as Ras l'Front or Act Up: these advocacy groups officially fight for freedom and equality, expressing themselves in the name of specific communities. For this reason, Baumier reveals himself to be sceptical regarding the leftist organizations' actions. He worries vis-à-vis fascist

means emanating from an anti-fascist movement, for example Le Cran rewriting dictionaries on a communitarian basis or the French Lesbian film festival being exclusively open to women. Baumier (2007, p. 26) denounces people's blindness vis-à-vis their assaulted freedom by these groupings and claims that if other political groups would insist on these actions, protests would follow. This fight for freedom leading to its actual negation in the name of equality is according to the writer at the origin of the unperceived confusion ruling at many levels of the post-democratic order (Baumier, 2007, p. 26). The discussion between democracy and communitarianism can be reduced to a debate between the concepts of universalism and particularism. Universalism stands for the global relevance of an idea, a concept, etc. while communitarianism vouches for the particularities of groups, communities, characterized by cultural, linguistic, economic, and social distinctness.

The tension between the principle of freedom and the principle of equality requires further explanation. Baumier (2007, p. 33) explains the concept of democracy as being based on the principle of freedom which altered radically in the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This progression went as far as incorporating the principle of equality causing an unprecedented confusion of terms. This specific disorientation in turn produces internal confrontations in democracy because of the recurrent tensions between the demands for specific rights by some communities (on the principle of equality) and the role played by the republican principle aiming at unifying citizens in a community of origin and responsibility (on the principle of freedom) (Baumier, 2007, p. 33). The novelty of this tension resides in its exacerbation: the core principle of modern democracy is egalitarianism which stipulates that "all human persons are equal in fundamental worth or moral status" (Arneson, 2013, p. 1) standing in the modern context for more equally distributed wealth and income among citizens. Drawing on the concept of 'the iron law of oligarchy' by R. Michels, Baumier states that the advent of oligarchy is only a question of time. Michels declared in his book *Political Parties* (1968) that each organization tends to produce an elite which would then institute an oligarchical system (Cassinelli, 1953). Nevertheless, Michels' definition is very broad and attempts to narrow the term down have revealed challenges to the elements that can be used to constitute a political theory.

The hollowing out of the Aronian democratic moment underlies the already mentioned inherent tension between equality and freedom. This imbalance however only came about with the disintegration of Communism as before "the Aronian democratic moment presented an equilibrium between the affirmed/declared ideal and the possible by



democracy. This equilibrium allowed Western democracies to resist Cold War violence” (Baumier, 2007, p. 40). Baumier claims that the equation, democracy equals the power of the people, has never been fully verified. Nonetheless, the Aronian moment allowed this equation to come close to reality.

In Baumier’s view, the confusion between equality and freedom stems from two further illusions diffused by the French left fraction: the relevance of social or radical democracy in overcoming the deficiencies of the Aronian moment of democracy as well as the significance of left ideas. Baumier calls left ideas ‘cultural Trotskyism’. Social or radical democracy (as represented by Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) challenges the liberal and representative concept of democracy. The liberal/representative approach and the radical/social one are supposedly antagonistic to one another. However, for Baumier both democratic moments have ceased to exist. Moreover, he claims that the rupture of radical democracy, and its related diverse political movements, shows the willingness to break with its past by dismissing any bonds to totalitarianism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, Baumier does not give evidence what this radical democratic rupture was and when it occurred besides failing to explain how bonds relating to the totalitarian past were dismissed.

A specific type of democracy is conceived in the French political system within the framework of alter-globalisation. The rise of this movement has enjoyed the support of philosophical critics in their interpretation of the world. The Italian philosopher Toni Negri’s (cited in Baumier, 2007, p. 27) primary claim is that capitalism evolves into an empire which would destroy itself from the inside by decentralised revolts by the multitude. For Baumier such ideas contain the most significant philosophical assumptions allowing the illusionary retention of radical/social democratic possibilities. According to Baumier’s understanding, this kind of philosophy is characterised by a total opposition to the status quo (2007, p. 28). Eric Voegelin’s (2000, cited in Baumier, 2007, p. 28) asserts that such political thought aiming at imposing a ‘real imaginary’ onto reality, leads to totalitarianism. Building upon Voegelin’s critique Baumier suggests that Negri’s adepts and Neo-Marxist thinkers in general ignore reality and exhibit totalitarian traits in wanting simply to exterminate ‘reality’ and to replace it with something wholly other.

### **c) Hostage Taking of the State by Left Political Parties and Movements**

Another feature of post-democracy is the parallel existence and development of alter-globalisation and radical Islamism given that both movements are in Baumier’s view,

“fighting for national liberation” (2007, p. 30) and are according to Bensaïd (2006, p. 18, cited in Baumier, 2007, p. 30) therefore naturally allied. The unique ambition of the far left is allegedly their willingness to recreate/overhaul the depiction of social and radical democracy although it’s time has long since passed. Attempts to prove the topicality of radical democracy in French politics simply unveils a contrary fact: “the continuous speech of radical democracy merely translates the permanence of its failure” (Baumier, 2007, p. 31). The same failure of social or radical democracy applies to liberal/representative democracy according to Baumier who does not explain why.

*i) The role of the Media Corporation*

The left radical camp jumped upon the wagon of alter-globalisation turning this movement into one of its cornerstones (Baumier, 2007, p. 22/3). The left radical camp showed capacity in undertaking actions by fighting/opposing all sorts of exclusion and bolstering social movements wherewith it acquired an apparent legitimacy by adaptation; according to Baumier this depicts the mechanism why French people suffer from an illusion as the radical left apparently won legitimacy on false premises. Under the Mitterand presidency (1988-1995), the government sought to incorporate the antifascist movement into the left general camp according to Baumier. For Baumier, since this time the French public has been held in an illusion by the government’s and media’s promotion of which he sees to be the radical democracy illusion baffling the public.

These claims by Baumier are joined by a last account explaining the excessive presence of left political issues at the heart of the French political system: the space provided for investigation/analysis and other events happening within the national public space are broken down by the media. The media allegedly figures 80% of leftist journalists abiding to radical nostalgia (Baumier, 2007, p. 23). According to Baumier, on these grounds, radical and social democracy have appropriated French civil society. Baumier gives the example of the French left trade unionist Olivier Besancenot and his announced evening protests by revolutionary people, the dangerous class sweeping through the streets following the Constitutional referendum regarding the European Union. Baumier claims the reality did not comply with pictures aired on the French television channels (Baumier, 2007, p. 25). The divergence between Besancenot’s announced evening protests and the pictures of empty streets aired on television signifies for Baumier that the non-compliance between left claims and reality is just another proof of French media misrepresenting reality.

‘Cultural Trotskyism’ has been accredited by the former editor of the French newspaper *Le Monde* E. Plenel as the leading ideology in most medias and qualified by Baumier as an “intellectual haze/mist that better suits the concept of cultural leftism than cultural Trotskyism” (Baumier, 2007, p. 23). In contrast to Baumier, Plenel views the denomination ‘cultural Trotskyist’ in a positive light. Trotskyism implies global scope. Bringing together culture and Trotskyism, by cultural Trotskyites Baumier means cosmopolitan anti-nationalists. Even if the coined term might appear to consist of two synonymous terms, cosmopolitanism and anti-nationalism differ from one another with respect to identity. Cosmopolitans can be designated as citizens of the world whose national identity does not play a major role given that under the rule of a world government national difference no longer exists, while anti-nationalists reject the nation state to foster their own personal identity (McKim and McMahan, 1997, p. 121). According to Baumier, the French media promote an ideology hostile to republican democracy and a national demos – the people – resulting in the fostering of the post-democratic state.

### **3.2 SCRUTINIZING BAUMIER’S IDEA OF POST-DEMOCRACY**

In Baumier’s and in Crouch’s depiction of post-democracy, politics is of central interest. Baumier sees politics as another sphere of influence monopolized by Left ideology that contributes to the gradual disappearance of democracy per se. Democracy is understood by Baumier (2004, p. 20) in its commonly acknowledged sense meaning equality among people and the right to various freedoms, see freedom of expression, freedom of thought and freedom of association among others. This definition of democracy reflects the concept’s most simple sense without including social factors such as habitus as understood in the Bourdieuan sense of cultivating cultural practices on a regular basis, economic factors such as disposing of financial means to literally ‘buy’ culture by investing in books, knowledge, travel, and eventually cultural/educational factors that can be summoned by having graduated from public or private schools for example. The list of other factors forging a person’s character and impacting on exercising citizen’s democratic rights is as long as it is exhaustive. This is the reason why democracy cannot produce ‘total’ equality merely by assuming that all citizens are formally equal to one another. The afore mentioned social, economic and cultural/educational differences existing within a given society would need to be acknowledged and addressed for such ‘total’ equality to be sought. In societies that are aware of these differences the mechanism known as positive discrimination is often used to

enable marginalised groups and people to gain positions in the working space and rights that they normally would not have accessed and exercised/enjoyed.

In Baumier's understanding, positive discrimination contradicts the basic democratic principle of equality and freedom. First, in his conservative understanding giving work positions to people simply because they are from marginalised groups goes against the principle of meritocracy that postulates that the most adequate person receives the position. In fact, meritocracy turns out to be a strong argument against positive discrimination. However, it is possible to observe that Baumier rejects the argument for positive discrimination on the grounds that adopting such a paternalistic mechanism for selection removes human agency from achievement and makes a person's position dependent upon bureaucratic favour rather than personal competence.

To make a bridge between the violation of meritocracy and totalitarianism, it is necessary to investigate law. Law grants rights to recognized communities; see for example the right of Muslims in Germany not to work during their religious celebrations (Saint-Paul, 2013). For Baumier, the right of same-sex marriage in France (Le Monde, 2013) or homoparental adoption not only distorts traditional conservative values. They also undermine the freedom of other citizens. Given that these laws address the needs of a minority at the national level, Baumier sees a rise in totalitarianism due to the cut back of individual rights of all citizens. Moreover, the fact that left ideology and left political parties endorse multiculturalism and social diversity leads Baumier to the following conclusion: to equate totalitarianism with left ideology and political parties. Needless to say, he opposes this fusion and therefore can be called a conservative.

The first sub-part of the next section investigates whether French citizens vote according to either ideology or according to a political party programmes. The study by Bélanger, Lewis-Beck, Chiche and Tiberj (2006) suggests that political identification in France occurs by adhering to a particular ideology. Therefore, citizens vote in elections according to ideology and not to political programmes put forward by political parties. According to Bélanger, Lewis-Beck, Chiche and Tiberj (2006) political systems resting on ideological political identification are more prone to conflict in opposition to systems in which identification occurs through political parties. As such, Baumier's claim is that French people adhering to left ideological thought that is being diffused by the cultural Trotskyist elite causes a democratic break-down. Left totalitarianism epitomises this break-down. Following from Belanger et al.'s political identification study, Baumier declares that French

citizens live in a totalitarian regime where the radical Left monopolize the media and claims turned into rights by marginalized groups cut back on the freedom of the mass. Dommett's (2012) investigation into the relationship between ideology and political parties suggests that political party programmes do not always reflect a distinct ideological stance. Nevertheless, she concludes that political parties and associations are the most frequently used tools to embody ideology. Following from this claim, Baumier blames the French left parties and associations for the reigning totalitarianism. However, De Benoist's (1995) article found declining French class consciousness and the fading support for the political Left-Right dichotomy among the French citizenry. This finding undermines the validity of the left totalitarian state ideology thesis in the light of fewer and fewer people identifying themselves with political parties and ideology. Therefore, it seems that people become increasingly apolitical instead of carrying a distinct political ideology. The final sub-section addresses the supposedly shared feature between left and right ideologies, that is to say totalitarianism.

**a) Political Identification in France: Ideology or Party Driven?**

Debates on party or ideology identification has been a popular topic in assessing voting behaviour in Western Europe. In France, these debates seem to be even more salient as two camps emerged analysing the voters' psychologies: Fleury and Lewis-Beck claim that "Ideology, not party, is the premier psychological anchor of the French voter, according to this [their own] analysis of the 1967 French National Election Study" (Fleury and Lewis-Beck, 1993, cited in Lewis-Beck and Chlarson, 2002, p. 491). Campbell (1966, cited in Lewis-Beck and Chlarson, 2002, p. 489) maintains the importance of French party identification even if this particular level of significance cannot match the level in the United States of America.

In the case that voters identify with parties, academic observations point to a stable party system (Bélanger, Lewis-Beck, Chiche and Tiberj, 2006). In the case of voters' identification through ideologies, the party system is supposed to be less stable and parties less enduring due to individual switching (Bélanger, Lewis-Beck, Chiche and Tiberj, 2006). With respect to Western Europe, a third comprehensive approach combining the two outlined identifications tools can be applied so as to analyse the (dis)continuities of the prevailing party systems.

How does this discussion relate to Baumier's post-democratic analysis? This analysis of the French voting behaviour supports Baumier's militant account of post-democracy. In

fact, Bélanger, Lewis-Beck, Chiche and Tiberj (2006) claim that electoral behaviour based on ideological identification translates into unstable political regimes. These characteristics unveils an internal contradiction in Baumier's thought: if post-democratic war that is being fought daily is synonymous with the elimination of difference, than democracy as understood exclusively in terms of equality between all humans by Baumier counts as supreme kind of war. Any kind of existing difference between humans is abolished rendering them uniform and therefore reminiscent of totalitarian regimes.

Returning to the discussion of the link between ideology and political parties as psychological anchor, it is still true to say that political parties still aim at representing political ideologies. In order to live in a democracy and to cast one's vote, political parties are at present the only possible representations acting on a national level.

#### **b) A Similarity Unveiled Between Left and Right Ideologies: Totalitarianism**

To further critically assess Baumier's conservative idea of democracy, comparing his account of left ideology with accounts addressing current right ideologies results in an unexpected outcome: a shared characteristic that is totalitarianism. Baumier believes that the Aronian moment ceased to exist simultaneously with the fall of the Berlin wall. This belief implies the fading away of the dynamic state of society. These thoughts partly relate to Fukuyama's "End of History" thesis. This expression stands for the triumphal perpetration of liberal representative democracy throughout the world by both the Washington Consensus and the New World Order. This specific kind of democracy embraces neo-liberalism as its ideology and supposedly fosters peace due to shared economic dependence in global markets. Fukuyama claims that liberal democracy as experienced in the Western countries comes at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the "unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism" (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 1). The victory of Western liberal democracy also results in the "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 2). The scholar maintains that the omnipresence of this particular regime type does not imply the end of ideology. However, it is worth asking to what extent and for how long citizens will continue to identify themselves with the prevailing ideology before loosening their sense of identification with respect to neo-liberalism.

The following example provided by the former dramatist and President of the Czech Republic V. Havel testifies in the political essay entitled *The Power of the Powerless* (1978)

the progressively disappearing identification and rising complacency of people vis-à-vis the then prevailing communist ideology. Havel gives the example of a greengrocer who has hanging in his shop window a poster with communist paroles, see “Workers of the world, unite!” (Havel, 1978). The dramatist then inquires in what way people think about and agree with such statements:

“I think it can safely be assumed that the overwhelming majority of shopkeepers never think about the slogans they put in their windows, nor do they use them to express their real opinions. That poster was delivered to our greengrocer from the enterprise headquarters along with the onions and carrots. He put them all into the window simply because it has been done that way for years, because everyone does it, and because that is the way it has to be.” (Havel, 1978).

Following Havel’s reasoning pressure, fear as well as habit account as pillars of the communist ideology. With Fukuyama’s depiction of a unilateral ideological world, it is possible to compare the degree of ideological endorsement in the former communist regime with the future prospects of the newly emerged neo-liberal regime due to their global aspiration.

Another paradox worth noting is the before mentioned emotions, pressure, fear and habit, that can also be found in S. Wolin’s study of democracy’s illiberal aspects, also known as ‘inverted totalitarianism’. The aftermath of 9/11 had major impacts on the government and society of the United States: so as to guarantee ‘national security’ individual rights and civil liberties fell prey to cutting backs and violations. With these developments, the government consolidated its illiberal democratic traits while empowering itself (Desch, 2007/8).

Therefore, Baumier’s claim of the French State’s capture by Left ideology has to be nuanced: in fact totalitarianism no longer seems solely to be related to Left politics and ideology. The Communist regimes as well as the present liberal democratic system both count as totalitarian, although they feature supposedly antagonistic ideologies.

### **c) Left and Right Political Affiliation and Class Consciousness in France**

Baumier’s conception of the French Republic falling prey to the Left ideology is further called into question by Alain de Benoist’s (1995) article entitled *End of the Right-Left Dichotomy*. De Benoist’s (1995) article addresses the progressive annihilation of the belief in distinct and antagonistic political ideologies by the French citizenry. Moreover, another

aspect suggests this political dichotomy is rapidly decreasing: the sentiment of class consciousness in the French context. De Benoist (1995) bases his study of political dichotomy and class consciousness on the French political barometer Sofres Polls which indicates the following trends: back in March 1981 33% of the population did not believe in the ideological differences of the French conservative party, the Republican Party, and its socialist counterpart, The Socialist Party. Only three years later, this proportion increased to 46% while in March 1988 45% of the French citizenry endorsed this perspective. Simultaneously after the disintegration of communism in November 1989 less than 50% of the French citizenry expressed their belief in this ideological rivalry (De Benoist, 1995, p. 73).

Paralleling this declining belief, it is necessary to delineate the percentage of French nationals still supporting the political divide: first, during the decade 1981 to 1991, the proportion of people upholding this separation diminished from 43% to 33%, that is to say by 10% (De Benoist, 1995, p. 74). Although fewer people expressed their skepticism instead of support for political ideologies, in 1991 64% of the French population still claimed to be conscious about their class belonging. During the 1960s, 90% of the French population characterized themselves as class conscious. In 1981 this consciousness fell to 73% (De Benoist, 1995, p. 74).

Moving on to French class consciousness, the two selected dates 1960 and 1981 assert a very strong disparity. This disparity translates into 1960 with a very high level of class consciousness while 1981 saw the contrary, a comparable low level. As potential reason for this sharp decline in class consciousness is the disappearing of the working class. The later transmitted strong class values that featured and still do to some extent in trade unions for instance. Comparing the French case with the British one, it seem as if the later witnessed the height of workers' class consciousness in the era of social democracy by calling for an improvement in work conditions, a greater voice in political affairs and an expansion of the Welfare state (Crouch, 2004, p. 2). As such, the emancipation of the working class can be set equal with the zenith of democracy. In the French context, democracy is guided by the motto 'liberté, égalité, fraternité' stemming from the 1789 French Revolution as well as by Tocquevillian (1835) principles enounced in *Democracy in America* that centre on people's sovereignty, the existence of public opinion and the leveling of conditions.

De Benoist's (1995) work supports Baumier's account of the state's capture by Left ideology in demonstrating that Baumier's view that the French citizenry believes in class,



politics and ideology, but rather that they have been ‘captured’ by an ideology. Already in November 1989 before the Aronian moment ceased to exist and the Left’s apparent take over, French people no longer believed in the Right-Left ideological dichotomy nor did they identify themselves with a specific class.

The chapter intends to show which actors and what mechanism helped in fostering Baumier’s post-democratic scenario. The actors originate from different spheres, be it from power structures such as the oligarchy whilst other come, from groups fighting for their identity to be recognized and to claim rights (such as the gay community). Baumier’s account of mechanisms centres on the distortion of truth by the media and communitarianism limiting citizens’ rights. Baumier’s selection of actors and mechanisms demonstrates the wide range of domains to which Baumier attributes both the emergence and structure of post-democracy. These domains stretch from social identities to politics to economics and media. These categorizations prove anew that post-democracy is understood in a very vast sense by proposing an encompassing analysis of causes and, consequences. The following part of this chapter sets out in the first part a summary of Baumier’s post-democratic scenario; second, three reasons for the democratic fragmentation resulting in post-democracy: the disregard of the French voters by the oligarchy over the European Union Lisbon Treaty which establishes a constitution; third, the rise of French communitarian law, the factor which in Baumier’s perspective mostly undermines the democratic order.

i) *The French Referendum on the Lisbon Treaty*

An important step of consolidating the French post-democratic order was the by disregarding of the results of the May 2005 European Union referendum. This vote showed division between the oligarchy and the people vis-à-vis the European project. The French popular ‘No’, was imitated a little later by the Dutch people for the same reasons, such as the end of a social welfare state and fear of a neo-liberal takeover. The directive Bolkestein was topic of discussion and associated with the Lisbon Treaty in the media. Although, the results were acknowledged and made public, the French oligarchy overruled the citizenry’s vote: “We experienced the real division between the oligarchy and the people. We saw the virtual reality of “democracy”. *The May 2005 referendum is a stage in the expression of Post-democracy: the on-going democratic atrophy exposed itself in the broad day light.*” (Baumier, 2007, p. 59). This overruling also contributed to the following understanding by Baumier: “A few days were sufficient for us to note that we changed the state of our

democratic society. Because, if the people said no, the oligarchy which holds in reality political, economic, social and media powers, under the pretext of democratic representation, said no to the people's no." (2007, p. 60). This result came as a surprise to the oligarchy according to Baumier given that the route for the envisaged result had already been laid out: "May 2005 will remain engraved in French history as the symbolic moment of post-democracy's emergence: in this regime, expressed choices by the people are endorsed – after having been prepared, or not, - by the pretending democratic oligarchy, according to whether the people's choices point in the same direction as do the oligarchy's choices." (2007, p. 60). With the oligarchy disregarding and discarding the actual result, post-democracy overcame another decisive stage: even though the referendum in the French case did not work out the way envisaged by the oligarchy, the latter is not constrained in respecting the results and can act freely even against the will of the people (Baumier, 2007, p. 60).

Baumier not only attributes the oligarchy disrespecting citizens' vote to France, but also to the United States of America "The same process in other countries, see the United States, during the 2001 presidential election as one part of the votes had not been counted so as that candidate who *had* to win would win them in a certain manner." (2007, p. 61). Baumier then goes on to state that the omitting of votes in the 2001 American presidential election qualifies as a coup d'état while still abiding to democratic principles: "The coup d'état by George Bush still fitted with historic customs which we inherited by democracy: the Republican candidate was not the first politician ascending to power by rigging electoral results. The disregard of the French No vote is not reconditioned by the elite during the next election which happened to be the 2007 presidential election: [...] the preparation for the 2007 presidential election carefully avoids to refer to this referendum, which had been a true cataclysm, inaugurating the end of liberal democracy; everything goes by as if this referendum never happened, as if the people had not clearly removed any legitimacy claims from the ruling "elite". Let's be frank: if we still lived in the state of a liberal democratic society, employers, journalists, policy analysts and elected politicians would have all resigned. [...] It is by this way that post-democracy currently overcomes a decisive step: the oligarchic power can organise a referendum by being persuaded of victory, for then losing the referendum without being constrained to respect the results. [...] The voice expressed by the people on the referendum exists without really existing: post-democracy is this moment in our history: the moment when democratic participation by the population ... became virtual." (2007, p. 61/2).

The referendum displayed the people's weakness and the oligarchy's power to abide by election results or not. The discrepancy between the people and the oligarchy not only translates into a difference in opinion but also in defining the political agenda.

i) *Communitarianism*

Baumier (2007, p. 269) claims that communitarianism causes the death of the republic. Communitarianism is conceived as the common good in contemporary post-democracy. Before outlining how communitarianism advances the entrenchment of post-democracy according to Baumier, a definition of communitarianism is provided. Charles Taylor (1989) is best known alongside Alasdair MacIntyre (1984), Michael Sandel (1998) and Michael Walzer (1983) for his communitarian critique of liberalism. Taylor (1985) critiques liberalism's understanding of the self on two grounds: first, he disputes liberalism's conception of human nature and secondly for liberalism's failure to recognize that even individuals in a liberal society when promoting individualistic values, for example freedom are creating a shared communities of such values. Communitarianism is, for some, the opposite of liberalism and as such often employed to critique liberalism (Abbey and Taylor, 1996). Taylor however argues this apparent dichotomy between liberalism and communitarianism is misleading. Ontological speaking someone could be a communitarian even whilst endorsing liberal values as well as individual rights (Abbey and Taylor, 1996). Calling on society, states and law to 'respect' the individuals, is itself a call for communal (shared) values. He claims that the apparent dichotomy flows from the absence of a concrete definition as well as from the multiple definitions of both communitarianism and liberalism in circulation (Abbey and Taylor, 1996).

In a nutshell Rawlsian Liberalism can be defined as a call for fair distribution of both economic resources and liberties by the government to enable individuals to lead their lives as freely as possible (Rawls, 1971). Rawlsian Liberalism was criticized in the 1980s by both Sandel (1981) and Taylor (1985; 1989) for its reliance on an individualistic conception of the self. According to Rawls' line of reasoning, every person has primary interest in their personal life-plan pursuing and revising these over time. Both Sandel (1981) and Taylor (1985; 1989) argue that Rawls does not pay enough attention to the fact that individuals are related to one another in various ways, be it by societal, family or religious bonds. If an individual was to pursue her or his personal life-plans at any cost these essential social bonds are highly likely to be damaged (Bell, 2012). Following from this view, Sandel (1981) and

Taylor (1985; 1989) called for politics not to focus exclusively on individuals' empowerment and improving their access to power, but to promote social values and well-being.

The ontological call by communitarians to revise political goals originated from Taylor's 1985 essay entitled *Atomism*. In *Atomism*, Taylor (1985) rejected the liberal assumption that people are inherently self-sufficient and live outside society. On the contrary, Taylor endorses and supports the Aristotelian account that "Man is a social animal, indeed a political animal, because he is not self-sufficient alone, and in an important sense is not self-sufficient outside a polis" (Taylor, 1985, p. 190). Bell (2012) further criticizes the atomistic outlook on men and society by claiming such a liberal account fails to acknowledge that liberalism itself assumes individuals to be members of and support a society that upholds liberal values, e.g. freedom.

Communitarianism's main concern is the establishment, maintenance and reproduction of societal ties. Although Taylor is considered to be one of the leading scholars on communitarianism (Abbey and Taylor, 1996), he admits to having reservations regarding the term communitarianism as the term was and is used by several people in different ways. As such, a concrete definition of communitarianism is needed. In his understanding of communitarianism, Taylor sides with "[...] social democrats who are worried about the way that various forms of individualism are undermining the welfare state [...]" (Abbey and Taylor, 1996, p. 3). Taylor further clarifies his communitarian position by declaring that in ontological terms, he is a communitarian endorsing the importance 'irreducibly social' goods – goods that bear a commonly understood and agreed upon goodness (Song, 2007) - while at an ethical level Taylor also advocates communitarian values. Taylor rejects the ideal of a neutral state as in his view such a state cannot exist. Taylor (1989) also supports 'higher, strongly evaluated goods' and envisages by this term goods which are at the origin of moral obligations of societal members'. The maintenance of such collective goods may require limits being placed upon the immediate preferences of society members as individuals. The social order of a society stipulates according to Taylor (1989) which goods are lower or higher and, as such, these higher goods' moral obligations. According to Taylor (1989), liberal individuals who adopt a highly individualistic moral stance miss out on the shared moral experience of members in a society motivated by social values, even whilst ignoring the instrumental benefits of living in a society.

For Taguieff communitarianism constitutes “an ideology whose function is to legitimate the reconstruction of individual groupings based on their origin, precisely of communities in the framework of modern nation states founded on the normative principle of cultural and/or ethnical homogeneity. Communitarianism accounts for an internal contestation of the national framework” (Taguieff, 2003, cited in Baumier, 2007, p. 269). Baumier also sees communitarianism as a threat to the unity of the republican nation state by stating that “*We assist the inversion of the community idea to the benefit of the resurgence of reintroduced peculiarities at the heart of the Republic under the name of communitarianism.* Several self-proclaimed communities claim a “right to difference”, in the name of the Republic [...] not realizing that this claim posits the end of the Republic in terms of a communion bringing together the entirety of the nation in a political entity giving the primacy to the collective good over the individual good.” (2007, p. 272). Baumier then alludes to the rule of a minority imposing their wishes onto the large majority: “In other words, whatever is ‘good’ for an individual or an internal group within the national community is not necessarily ‘good’ for the entirety of the community, particular claims cannot be set equal to a ‘right’, even less to a ‘human right’. This is the place where lies the communitarian rupture that threatens the Republic.” (2007, p. 272). Communitarianism also exhibits expansionist features in Baumier’s reasoning: “Communitarianism tending to exacerbate itself in all directions and is a way of destroying the Republic... This destructive will is not a result per coincidence. *The destruction of the Republican foundation as a characteristic of post-democracy which currently develops* is a result of the synchronicity of a philosophical outlook on the world (an ultra-individualist materialism and hedonism), paired with the history of communitarian claims [...] and by the concomitant constitution of pressure groups and lobbies which are not presented as such.” (2007, p. 272/3).

R. Esposito supports Baumier’s view regarding communitarianism as destroying force of democracy. Esposito claims that “one constantly has to remember the double face of community; on the one hand it is the most adequate, or even the unique dimension of the animalistic «human», while on the other hand, it is the deduction which can dissolve power” (Esposito, 2000, cited in Baumier, 2007, p. 273). Following this reasoning, Esposito further states that *res publica* and community are two distinct entities. He then further describes in a detailed way the incompatibility between communitarianism and democracy. Communitarianism is said to be: “a negation of the Republican concept through the common good concept, a eulogy of the individual as an end in itself, a unilateral definition of the

human as an animal – to the point that one seriously starts to question whether the human is a dog like any other”, whilst he gives “... a definition of the Republic as anti-individualistic drift...” (2007, p. 274).

The ideological and totalitarian rejection of the real has been advanced in the name of one ‘true and real world’. The ‘true and real world’ was proclaimed by the general public. From the general public’s point of view, “communitarianism perceived as vector of individual liberation emerged in France with the successful claims by the gay community...” (2007, p. 275). Martel speaks of a system by which he means a social movement by “pink khmers” (2007, p. 275) which laid the foundations for other communitarian claims to emerge which nowadays are at the heart of political debates and which were at the heart of the presidential campaigns in 2007.

The communitarianisation of the French Republic expanded between the 1990s and 2000s with laws paving the way for civil unions (PACS), then with the law against homophobia. The next stage would be the right of same-sex marriage and the right to adopt by same-sexed couples. For Baumier, these rights need to be debated. He claims that “the right to adopt by same-sex couples would merit at least a true debate in society, which is rejected in the name of simplicity: a claim is equal to a right.” (Baumier, 2007, p. 276). Baumier further states that the laws had been passed due to pressure and actions undertaken by political party’s lobbies, outside of any national debates without respecting democratic rules. He further points to the fact “the thing [avoidance of debates] is even more shocking in the light of lobbies in question not representing their community at all. They only represent themselves.” (2007, p. 276).

In sum, communitarianism is viewed as the prime vector in the destruction of the democratic Aronian moment which in France exhibits republican traits. The “communitarianisation of the French political space is both anti-democratic and anti-republican, and [...] occurs in the name of some Aronian democratic values. By this, this process is an example of post-democracy.” (Baumier, 2007, p. 270). Post-democracy no longer guarantees the equalities of its citizens nor independent debates as communitarian groups insist that their claims be turned into rights something the legislators support. The democratic fragmentation also is linked to a rise in individualism following Baumier’s thinking: the claiming of rights might be beneficial for one group while destructive for another one. As the democratic principle of equality no longer holds true, communitarianism appears as the stepping stone for individualism.

### **3.3 REFLECTIONS ON MECHANISMS FOSTERING POST-DEMOCRACY ACCORDING TO BAUMIER**

#### **a) Political Parties' Support for the French Referendum on the 2005 European Union Constitutional Treaty**

On 29 May 2005, the French public voted against the European Union (EU) Constitutional Treaty, also known as the Lisbon Treaty. This treaty resulted from the European Council's Laeken Summit that took place in December 2001. The Summit had set the agenda for discussions about "a special Constitutional Convention on the Future of Europe." (Hainsworth, 2006, p. 98). The former French president V. G. D'Estaing oversaw the Convention which, eventually, presented in July 2003 a treaty outlining the potential European Constitution (Hainsworth, 2006, p. 98). Following the French negative vote on the referendum of the European Union Constitutional Treaty, The Netherlands headed in the same direction only three days later in early June 2005, while Ireland abandoned its planned referendum on the Constitutional Treaty. The French referendum turned out to be one with the highest percentage of electoral participation; almost 70% of the French public cast their vote, 55% of these voters rejected the Constitutional project of the European Union. Before investigating the reasons for the French 'No', the media representation of the referendum Baumier's claim of a Left ideological capture of the event, and the position of the French political parties is addressed.

As soon as the then French President Chirac declared that a referendum would be held on the Lisbon Treaty, French political parties sought for a viable position. Beginning May 2005 the mainstream branch of the conservative Union For A Popular Movement (UMP) party's national council expressed their support vis-à-vis the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by a large margin, that is to say by 91% (Hainsworth, 2006, p. 100). The less dominant Union for Democracy France headed by D'Estaing joined the dominant UMP in their support for the European constitutional project. The conservative parties situated on the margins such as the Front National (FN), The Movement For France (MPF), The National Republican Movement (MNR) as well as the Rally For France (RPF) all rejected the constitutional endeavor. Within the mainstream UMP a minority of deputies such as Nicolas Dupont-Aignan advocated the 'No' vote (Hainsworth, 2006, p. 100).

The No option was popular among French left political parties, see the French Communist Party (PCF), The Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), Worker's Struggle

(LO), Worker's Party (PT) and social movements, see Attac and the Peasant Confederation (CP) (Hainsworth, 2006, p. 101). Other left political groupings such as the New Socialist Party (NPS) and the New World Network (NWN) much contributed to developing the 'No' campaign. In any case, the most important dissident from the French Left was the Minister of the Economy, Finance and Industry who currently serves as Holland's Foreign Minister: Laurent Fabius. Many PS members resented Fabius' opposing of the European constitutional project and called for his expulsion (Hainsworth, 2006, p. 101).

The mainstream left political parties such as the Socialist Party (PS) and the Green Party (LV) pronounced no clear cut position: the official position of both parties was supportive of the European Constitutional Treaty. However, a closer look at internal party politics shows, only 59% of PS members supported the treaty while only 53% of LV members did so. Hainsworth (2006, p. 101) claims that such support as there was mainly stemmed from the party's leading figures such as Hollande for the PS and Wehring, Mamère and Cohn-Bendit for LV.

Following the referendum, the Left political landscape experienced difficulties. The position regarding the European Constitutional Referendum had fractured the socialist party, a fact that was not eased by the two 2004 political victories at European and regional elections (Hainsworth, 2006, p. 111). The secretary of the PS, Holland, faced calls for resignation, while Fabius consolidated his position as a politician at a national level. Still, Fabius' empowerment did not carry any advantages for his potential presidential candidature due to his exposed differences with the socialist party.

Following from the analyze of the French political parties' position towards the referendum, it is possible to critically assess Baumier's claim that the referendum was a proof of the left leaning oligarchy's overruling of the citizens' vote and opinion as well as his claims regarding the false depiction of the event by the vast majority of cultural Trotskyist journalists. First, Hainsworth's evidences (above) about political positions concerning the 2005 referendum evidences that right political parties, in particular the UMP, at 91%, expressed a higher proportion of support than left political parties; see the PS with 59%. As such seems that of the two main French political parties, the conservatives proved to be more Europhile than their socialist counterpart. Generally speaking, this situation appears paradox: conservative parties normally convey values such as strong feelings towards national sovereignty. Socially inclined parties usually advocate integration at both international and national levels and support the idea of multiculturalism. In the French case, these



generalizations hold true to a certain degree; however, these generalizations turned out to be false with respect to the European constitutional project.

As such, Baumier's claim that it was a cultural Trotskyist French oligarchy that overruled the popular 'No' vote seems indefensible: the highest proportion of advocates regarding the referendum emanated from the conservative ranks. Moreover, the fact that Chirac, the then conservative President introduced the referendum calls into question the French oligarchy's ideological and political affiliations. If it is true, as Baumier claims, that the oligarchy enforces its will on the broad mass, then the ruling elite must endorse both conservative ideology and the conservative party. This conclusion turns out to be the first failure for Baumier regarding the political left ideological hostage-taking of the state.

The stirring question about the no-vote remains whether this vote reflects France's turning away from the European project. In fact, Veit (2005, p. 2) claims that the no-vote has to be acknowledged in a pro-European context and points to the French people's hope of negotiating the Constitutional Treaty and further advancing European integration. The current French Minister of Exterior Affairs, Fabius, who is known for his pro-European stance, appears as having contributed to the socially acceptable no-vote (Veit, 2005, p. 2). This position can be explained by Fabius's perception of the Treaty: he held the view that by supporting the Lisbon Treaty Neo-liberalism would eventually find its way into the member states meaning the end of a 'social Europe'. Therefore voting against the constitutional project is set as equal to the approval of more social security and maintaining the same level of employment (Veit, 2005, p. 3). One more reason for the no-answer lies in the French public frustration with their government and its then head of state, J. Chirac. Another factor accounting for the negative outcome was confusion about the actual question being asked: the official question posed by the then President Chirac centred on the replacement of the Nice treaty by the Lisbon Treaty. The former Treaty, signed in February 2001 and which entered in force in February 2003, focused on reforms of European Union institutions as the total number of European Union member countries reached 25. In fact, the main changes occurred in the European Commission and in the European Council's voting system (European Union, 2013).

The Lisbon Treaty signed in December 2007, and fully enacted two years later, aspired to democratize the EU, to render the organization more competent and improve of its way of addressing major problems such as climate change. Major transformations included an increase of powers for the European Parliament, again reforms in the voting regime of the

European Council and the establishment of a permanent president of the latter, the appointment of a High Representative regarding Foreign Affairs as well as setting up a diplomatic service representing the EU (European Union, 2013). Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty allocates power to the EU institutions as well as to the member countries and affirms which powers are shared. The concluding point to make about Baumier's depiction of the Lisbon Treaty is that Baumier sees the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty as another proof of left ideology aiming at capturing the French state by advocating a greater level of EU integration. In Baumier's view, EU integration means the end of the French nation-state and of the French sovereignty. He blames the French Socialist Party for the referendum's initiation, while Hainsworth (2006) showed that the French referendum on the Constitutional Treaty was initiated under Chirac's conservative presidency. French conservative party members also displayed greater support for the European constitutional project than their socialist counterpart. Baumier's discussion of the Lisbon Treaty points to confusion over the question: for Baumier the Lisbon Treaty raises the question whether left ideology takes an even stronger hold on the French state than before, whereas for the electorate the question centred on expanding and empowering EU institutions.

The Lisbon Treaty referendum ties back to Baumier's perception of post-democracy as the referendum is supposedly a particularly clear example of when the oligarchy ignored the wish of the French population as well as the moment when left ideology reached its zenith and displayed its power. However Baumier does not exclusively see the disregard of the citizens' vote with respect to the 2005 referendum as the event consolidating post-democratic totalitarianism. In fact, other events such as Hitler's eugenics programme from the 1930s (Baumier, 2007, p. 207), the recognition during the 1970s of gay rights in France (2007, p. 273), the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (2007, p. 38), the American Patriot Act from the early 2000s (2007, p. 37) and the beginning of cloning in 2005 (2007, p. 198) all count as milestones in his view. For Baumier what each of these events has in common is the state's rejection of national and traditional 'limits' and assuming the absolute (totalitarian) paves to 'play god' with the very foundation of its citizens' life and death.

Bowler and Donovan (2002, cited in Schuck and De Vreese, 2011, p. 184) see referenda as a means to further advance political institutions' legitimacy. Mendelsohn and Parkin (2001, cited in Schuck and De Vreese, 2011, p. 181) hold that with this kind of election citizens' engagement raises. Barber (1984) sees them as a mean of civic formation. Therefore, referenda are assumed to combat political disinterest and aloofness. Resnick

(1997, cited in Schuck and De Vreese, 2011, p. 181) states that referenda hold as an advantage the low probability of undemocratic regimes to emergence. This statement is refuted by both Dalton (2001, cited in Schuck and De Vreese, 2011, p. 182) and Sartori (1987, cited in Schuck and De Vreese, 2011, p. 182) who respectively claim that the threshold for populism to develop is very low as is the threshold for political intolerance because of the straight forward nature of the posed question.

The popularity of referenda can be explained by two antagonistic hypotheses. The hypothesis focusing on cognitive mobilization stipulates that the segment of better educated and more politically aware people in society are more inclined to participate in referenda because of their will to participate in the political sphere and their knowledge. This assumption results from the observations made by Dalton (1984, cited in Schuck and De Vreese, 2011, p. 183) and Inglehart (Schuck and De Vreese, 2011, p. 183) which found that political decision-making democratizes in situations in which citizens assume an active role.

The 2005 referendum was not used officially as an affirmation of Chirac's presidency. However, behind the party's facade, discussions about choosing the party's candidate for the 2007 presidential election were at their promoting height. Referenda as explained above carry both positive and negative aspects. For Baumier's analysis of post-democracy, the referendum was not only important in terms of directly influencing politics, but also because it could become a tool for populism by the elite for consolidating their position (Hawlett, 2010). As elucidated before, the actual French elite in 2005 belonged to the conservative strain which therefore could potentially have (mis)used the referendum for conservative populism. Although the referendum first rejected the project which in 2008 was ratified by the French parliament, an atmosphere of past values as offered by Chirac surrounded the poll. According to Marlière (2013) "a movement that tends to draw its values from the past and which offers an ideological and sentimental landmark" counts as populist. Marlière (2013) further claims that discussions on populism reached its zenith during the French 2005 referendum as the electorate sided with the 'No' answer expressed by marginal parties instead of sliding with the 'yes' answer by the mainstream parties and the media. Following the result, the UMP and the PS jointly reprehended the media and the allegedly unreasonable electorate. The Lisbon Treaty officially was ratified one year later. The citizenry could not express their opinion a second time towards the project as the Treaty was adopted outside the electoral sphere. Sarkozy imposed the Lisbon Treaty in an undemocratic manner evidencing the conservatives' authoritarian, if not even totalitarian, traits. In order to nuance the bitter

taste of referenda, Laclau (Truong, 2012) declares that populism is a kind of constructing politics and relevant, if not even intrinsic and vital, to any democracy. It is characterized by the mobilization of the mass versus the elite and official institutions. As such, it is possible to say that referenda are merely one variety of political antagonism even if they carry memories of totalitarian regimes.

Populism spreads through media. The rise in ‘tabloidisation’ of news has been noticed by Schuck and De Veer (2011) as well as by many other academics. Populism replaces quality in the press which translates into a rise in so-called ‘infotainment’, scandals and a decline in concrete news as noted both Franklin (1997, cited in Schuck and De Veer, 2011, p. 191) and Langer (1997, cited in Schuck and De Veer, 2011, p. 191). Considering the rising commercial pressure and expanding competitive markets, newspapers experience pressure to sustain a constant readership. For this reason, Esser (1999, cited in Schuck and De Veer, 2011, p. 191) notes that easy and quickly saleable information are on the rise.

In the European Union (EU) context, referenda represent a way in voting both democratically and directly for the European Parliament for example. As such, EU referenda are a direct way to engage citizens in EU politics. Opponents of the referendum showed even more interest in using channels of direct democracy to express their opinion (Schuck and De Veer, 2011). As such, contrary to Baumier’s belief referenda serving as a tool of the oligarchy in pushing through its favoured laws, Schuck and De Veer (2011) maintain that referenda hold the advantage of allowing citizens to both express their political opinion and influence politics by a direct vote. Moreover, as the French referendum showed, the 2005 referendum also bore a normative advantage in the sense of engaging people who normally are not politically interested and do not participate in political life.

#### **b) Communitarianism as a Destructive Force of Democracy?**

Kukathas (1996) shares Baumier’s scepticism and view regarding the combination of communitarianism with the concept of republic. Although republics do not necessarily feature a high commitment to or degree of democracy, this form of government is usually associated with democracy. As such, it is possible to ask whether communitarianism is compatible with democratic regimes. Kukathas (1996) claims that communitarianism is generally seen as a critique of liberal democracy. Communitarians accuse liberals of neglecting both the existence of community as an entity/institution as well as of communities being the carrier of solidarity (Kukathas, 1996, p. 67). Liberals are confused when facing a

so-called community because of their strong belief in secluded and separated individuals constituting society. By believing in individualism, liberals cannot understand the communitarians' outlook on the world (Kukathas, 1996, p. 67). Kukathas invokes Taylor's (1989) 'communitarian Republic' concept by in order to subsequently address criticism and the failure of the idea of communitarianism.

C. Taylor aims at bringing together the two antagonistic streams of thought, communitarianism and liberalism, in the concept entitled 'communitarian Republic'. This concept not only tries to combine liberal and communitarian elements, but also features at its core a kind of republicanism that "better recognizes and appreciates the importance of citizenship, of patriotism, and of solidarity which ultimately underpins freedom." (Kukathas, 1996, p. 67). According to Taylor, communitarians and liberals differ over two main arguments: first, they disagree on the explanation of both social structure and action with respect to ontological matters; second, their understanding of individuals diverges. The problems faced on ontological matters can be summed up by the distinction between holists and atomists who respectively hold the view that identity and actions can only be encountered within society in contrast to the view that conditions, actions and structures occurring in social spheres reflect individual characteristics (Kukathas, 1996, p. 68). Undertaking social actions also entails advocating controversy when opposing a holistic view to an atomized one: either the collective good is emphasized or individual freedoms and rights are favoured.

Taylor's concept of communitarian Republic rests on the following elements: an alleged superior ontology, a more comprehensive understanding of the origin and the nature of society, and a kind of republicanism which can be traced back to the civic humanist tradition. These elements put together result in a perspective which sees society as the expression of a common good in contrast to the perspective inherent to liberals that see society as an agglomeration of isolated individuals. According to Taylor (1989, cited in Kakuthas, 1996, p. 69) societies are animated by common goods. The relationship between citizens is reminiscent of friendship. In such a setting the citizenry views laws as a reflection of their dignity. The ideas of dignity and solidarity can be easily combined with the idea of patriotism as the later turns out to be of significance for a society that is established on a belief in a shared destiny. The bonds of solidarity which are conducive to the emergence of republican patriotism also count as the basis for freedom according to Taylor. He holds that solidarity in a republican setting "underpins freedom because it provides the motivation for

self-imposed discipline; ... it is essential for a free regime because this calls on its members to do things that mere subjects can avoid.” (Taylor, 1989, cited in Kukathas, 1996, p. 69).

The criticism put forward by Kukathas (1996) focuses on the validity of Taylor’s social ontology as well as on his stipulated strong relationship between freedom and the communitarian Republic. Kukathas claims that Taylor’s social ontology is not feasible because of poorly defining what he means exactly by the expression ‘irreducibly social goods’ (Taylor, 1995, cited in Kukathas, 1996, p. 71), albeit the reader learns that culture and community are social goods. Taylor’s failure to define why communities and cultures count as ‘goods’ leads Kukathas to explain his position as follows: “The benefit I get from my culture is my benefit even though it may be constituted in part by my actions and beliefs as inculcated by that very culture. Just as with material goods, collective production or provision does not entail collective consumption’ (Hardin, 1995, cited in Kukathas, 1996, p. 73). In short, consumption is executed on an individual level and not on a collective one.

Kukathas’ second criticism of Taylor centres on the alleged freedom gained through the communitarian Republic. Kukathas holds that the statement is not valid because society’s nature is characterized by both cooperation and conflict. Taylor’s argument is rejected when it comes to the ruling power in his communitarian Republic. Kukathas claims that politics is generally a set of power games carried out within the ruling elite. Although the governing body in republics are supposedly the citizenry, Kukathas (1996, p. 73) claims that political power is generally controlled by a limited group of people. He then goes on to claim that participatory self-rule is an illusion. The supplementary criticism of the tying together of freedom and self-rule concentrates on the fact that freedom not only means the ability to participate in self-rule but also the freedom to oppose and resist the dominant political paradigm. This point is valid in the sense of that the dearth in freedom is perceptible in regimes where it is difficult to oppose official governmental positions (Kukathas, 1996, p. 74).

Communitarianism has been popularized by Etzioni during the Spring 1995 lecture series at Washington University. Etzioni sees communitarianism as “a social movement aiming at shoring up the moral, social and political environment. Part change of heart, part renewal of social bonds, part reform of public life.” (Etzioni 1994, cited in Newman and De Zoysa, 1997, p. 628). Reforms focus on reconstructing communities as well as on expanding the space of public inquiry among other things while aiming at strengthening bonds of solidarity between communities via social cohesion and stability. These reforms rely on self-

help as much as on ideas of duty and individual responsibility (Newman and De Zoysa, 1997, p. 629).

Although Baumier's and Kukathas' perspectives on communitarianism locate this train of thought on the left side of the political spectrum due to communitarianism's critique vis-à-vis unrestrained capitalism and the rule of the free-market paired with energetic politics. However, authors such as D. Willet (1992, cited in Newman and Zoysa, 1997, p. 630) state that the British Conservative Party conveys communitarian values while expanding the welfare state and advocating the free market. Gray (1993, cited in Newman and Zoysa, 1997, p. 630) who was once a fierce supporter of the radical neo-liberal right now calls for the implementation of Disraeli's 'one nation' concept of conservatism which still features among current Conservative party policies. Lastly, Etzioni shows common points between communitarianism and the American Progressive Movement from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Academic contributions to the development of communitarianism such as that of de Maistre as well as Schmitt have respectively influenced totalitarian ideologies. In the first case Mussolini's fascism while in the case of Schmitt the concept of racial superiority employed by the Nazis. As such, here was a time when socialism, change as well as democracy counted as antipode to communitarian thought. The relationship between communitarianism and conservatism was, at that time self-evident.

In my view, communitarianism is a mean for greater social equality as 'pure' egalitarian democracy does not take account into social inequality. Social inequality has repercussions on a person's level of education, health and delinquency for example. Albeit the range of the repercussions cannot be generalized, they hold true in many cases. By the means of positive discrimination, greater social equity can be reached as persons who in a perfect egalitarian society might not ascend to a specific position and could not voice their opinion, can do so. In contrast for Baumier, communitarianism undermines egalitarian democracy and cuts back citizens' freedom by turning claims of specific groups into rights without the consens of the larger population.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter laid out Baumier's vision of post-democracy as well as the mechanisms he identified as contributing to post-democracy. His depiction of the post-democratic order spans various topics. These topics range across disciplines such as politics, sociology, philosophy, psychology, media, power, humanism and war. Baumier's account is founded on

his personal opinion and analysis of events: he neither uses quantitative methods for supporting his statements, nor does he state from the beginning the use of a qualitative methodological approach. As such the academic validity of this work is questionable, and is rather a manifesto of his own opinion. In sum, post-democracy is for Baumier the disregard of the democratic vote of the masses by a small delineated group of powerful people imposing their will. This small delineated group of powerful people, referred to as an oligarchy by Baumier, consists of politicians and journalists. Baumier's account of post-democracy explains the illusions he claims the French citizenry are subject to. This illusion is two-fold: on a first level, the French citizenry think they are living in an Aronian moment of democracy, an expression standing for the constitutional-pluralist system as can be found in Western parliamentary and presidential systems. Within this belief, a part of the people think radical, or social, democracy to be an improvement on the constitutional-pluralist system. Baumier declares that both parties, that is to say the people endorsing liberal and representative democracy and the people who believe they are living in representative democracy but support social and radical democracy, are mistaken and living in an illusion. As long as these two illusions are up held, post-democracy can further develop.

Subsequently, this chapter showed how Baumier claims the capture of the media by left ideology as highlighted in the example of the French newspaper *Le Monde*. Baumier calls the editors of *Le Monde* and by extension also the ruling elite 'cultural Trotskyists'. Journalists and the elite emanate according to Baumier's account from the same social circles, attended the same schools, share the same interests and, therefore, speak the same language. For Baumier the media is used as a tool in advancing the post-democratic state, wherewith the elite and journalists act in concert. Baumier sees the masses misled into accepting the claims of the elite. Even the fate of citizens as human beings is undone, he claims. With this situation in place, citizens are said to be turned into post-humans who no longer represent an obstacle to the ruling power. The exceptional few who remained as challengers to the developing regime are muted by post-democracy's fermenting of a 'political correctness' designed to silence dissent and enforce conformity.

The second part of this chapter elaborated the mechanisms that Baumier claims are leading to post-democracy and outlined the actors that contribute to post-democracy's entrenchment. These mechanisms belong to different domains, such as politics, media and sociology. The May 2005 French referendum on the EU constitutional treaty represented for Baumier an important stage in moving closer to the post-democratic regime. This regime is



defined by the disregard by the elite of the expressed vote of the citizenry. The ruling elite of the country intended to persuade the electorate to vote in favour of the draft treaty. However, the citizenry chose to reject the draft, an outcome which, according to Baumier, both surprised the oligarchy and led them three years later to use an undemocratic channel to ratify the treaty. Finally, communitarianism was invoked by Baumier to describe the slow process of fragmenting the French *res publica*. The second part of this chapter called into question Baumier's mechanisms. First, evidence was given that the 2005 ruling elite was conservative and not socialist as Baumier suggests. Moreover, the usage of referenda popularized by French conservatives suggests hidden benefits that this political party expected to receive. Second Taylor's account on communitarianism challenges Baumier's claim that communitarianism fragments the democratic republic. Communities advocate common goods whilst liberal individuals pursue their individual interests that challenges the emergence of public goods. Finally, Etzioni's depictions of communitarianism's right past challenges Baumier's claim that communitarianism is intrinsically left-wing by giving the example of the American Progressive Movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## MAIN CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the thesis will first provide a short summary on the different chapters before then moving on to contrasting both Crouch's and Baumier's analysis of post-democracy. Chapter two delineated the different characteristics constituting Crouch's conception of post-democracy. Post-democracy appears as much as a "...situation[s] where boredom, frustration and disillusion have settled in after a democratic moment; when powerful minority interests have become far more active than the mass of ordinary people in making the political system work for them; where political elites have learned to manage and manipulate popular demands; where people have to be persuaded to vote by top-down publicity campaigns." (Crouch, 2004, p. 20). This situation is further intensified by the gain in and loss of power by the following actors: "The rising power political importance of the global firm, the vacuum left by the decline of the working class, and the way in which a new political class of political advisers and business lobbyists was filling that vacuum all helped explain why the government social policy was becoming increasingly obsessed with giving work to private contractors. This debate was also part of the post-democratic debate, and in fact provided a major example of the practical consequences of post-democracy." (Crouch, 2004, p. x).

The chapter then outlined different key characteristics of Crouch's post-democracy. First there are spectacular elections. Whilst "elections certainly exist and can change governments, public electoral debate is a tightly controlled spectacle, managed by rival teams of professional experts in the techniques of persuasion, and considering a small range of issues selected by those teams" (2004, p. 4). Then there are politicians' questionable strategies to win votes where "personality-based election campaigning used to be characteristic of dictatorships and of electoral politics in societies with weakly developed systems of parties and debate. [...] Promotion of the claimed charismatic qualities of a party leader, and pictures and film footage of his or her person striking appropriate poses, increasingly take the place of debate over issues and conflicting interests" (2004, p. 26).

By outlining Crouch's post-democratic account, it was then possible to reconstitute the constituent elements of his account of democracy. The second part of chapter two explained why Keynesianism allowed democracy to function by encompassing a greater number of participants than Neoliberalism currently does. Then, the weaknesses of Keynesianism public demand management and reasons for its non-sustainability were dealt

with. Crouch's view on Keynes' alleged social inclination was subsequently scrutinized in the light of Keynes qualifying himself as both liberal in the ideological sense and a Liberal meaning a supporter of the then British liberal political party. Although Keynesian public policy has been abandoned following the 1970s oil crisis, Crouch points to the development of a privatized version of Keynesianism by which he highlights Keynesianism's continuous relevance. Considering events such as the housing bubble leading people to run up high amounts of personal debts, the existence of privatized Keynesianism is noteworthy. Additionally, the fact that governments undertook measures such as fiscal stimulus in the 2008 financial crisis proves the relevance of Keynesianism in the so-called neo-liberal era.

Chapter two gave evidence of the fate of political parties under post-democracy, assessing Crouch's claim that the 1997 New Labour government was a continuation of the previous conservative rule: "Labour in Britain are at last successfully rivalling the centre-right in their appeal to them [lower middle-class interests], it is because they have started doing the same, not because they are articulating wider concerns of these groups, which might be uncomfortable for the corporate elite. They are represented as having no discontent except with the quality of public services – which is increasingly taken to mean that they want them privatized." (Crouch, 2004, p. 59/60).

Three different academics views on Crouch's claim regarding New Labour being a continuation of the previous conservative government were provided: Applebaum (1997) shares Crouch's opinion on New Labour's novelty divergence from former Labour governments even whilst not diverging from Thatcherism. She claims that with the 1997 New Labour's victory of the general election, the Labour party's former political goals were abandoned. Moreover, Blair's declared sympathy and admiration for Thatcher's party renewal (1997, p. 46) as well as the abolition of Clause IV (1997, p. 47) hinted at New Labour's non-socialist outlook on politics. Other measures undertaken by New Labour reminiscent of conservative rule were maintain the same level of personal income tax as well as the cutting down on Welfare provisions (1997, p. 47). Gray's (2004) view on Blair's Labour renewal is more nuanced when compared to Applebaum's: in fact, Gray sees Blair's government in retrospect as comprehensible with respect to the irreversibility of Thatcher's economic policies. Blair envisaged a broader extension of this economic regime, one that was in general paired with social cohesion. The free-market would it was claimed accommodate fairness and should be further deregulated (2004, p. 39). Finally, Toye (2004) puts into perspective New Labour's innovativeness and uniqueness in the most nuanced way. Toye

(2004) also comes closest to New Labour's substance by investigating the British Labour party's longer history. Toye's study concludes that New Labour is not 'new'. Given that Toye (2004) is the only scholar out of the three visions on New Labour who actually investigates the British Labour party's history, it is possible to conclude that his account is the most pertinent of all to assessing Crouch's claim that New Labour is the new face of post-democratic politics. Toye's analysis suggests New Labour is not that new, even if the economic power confronting them has shifted. Long standing struggles between critical and accommodating strands within Labour remain even whilst New Labour reflects the rising influence of pre-capitalist elements.

Chapter two also gave evidence of the firm's primordial role in post-democracy. Crouch acknowledges the global firm as the main actor in post-democracy whose significance had for a long time not been taken into consideration: "For most of the twentieth century the European left completely failed to appreciate the significance of the firm as an institution." (Crouch, 2004, p. 31). With the Monetarist move from macro- to micro-economic management, the state came to endorse the view that the 'firm' was the best (rational) agent of economic decision-making. Demands emanating from consumers and global competition reached new heights, transforming the global firm into a "robust and demanding creature" (Crouch, 2004, p.32). In order to become and/or remain attractive for the firm, governments and political parties made citizens aware of the dysfunctional work system along with the related labour rights by emphasizing the urgent need to alter them (2004, p. 33). The citizenry then actively votes for deregulation.

The actual goal of the global firm is "to locate itself primarily in the financial sector, because this is where capital is at its mobile, and to sub-contract everything else it does to small, insecure units." (2004, p. 37). By doing so, the firm is liberated from any managerial tasks providing the freedom to focus exclusively on brands and concepts. The Media Corporation especially deserves to be investigated because of its contribution in diminishing choices of available information and downgrading the quality of employed political semantics as well as of communication (2004, p. 46).

The subsequent subsection of the second part dealt with Lindblom's (1977) study of the market's and democracy's incompatibility. Crouch mentions Lindblom in *Post-democracy* and points to Lindblom's study of the favourite position of business in politics. Therefore, the novelty of Crouch post-democratic paradigm is debatable though Crouch's *Post-democracy* may be simply the coming Americanization of European politics. Following

this discussion, reasons were provided why the firm cannot after all be as powerful and threaten the government with outsourcing jobs to foreign countries. These reasons were partially addressed by Crouch in terms of sunk cost, while the economic theory of the insider versus the outsider further provided grounds to explain why outsourcing does not always work. Therefore, the idea of the powerful firm was partially refuted as outsourcing to cheaper labour places might hold at first sight advantages, while at a second glance, training new workers and the cost of delocalizing limit the threatening power by the firm. The final subsection outlined Crouch's idea of the media diffusing propaganda while being owned by a small group of delineated powerful people. The example of Berlusconi was given to support Crouch's post-democratic scenario in Italy for the following reasons: This threat emanating from the Media corporation is about favouring one candidate in comparison to others not due to his political expertise but due to his glossy appeal, for example managerial skills, slick appearance and advertising like eloquence, enabling him to gain votes within narrowly constrained policy limits. Political ideology is replaced by this glossy attraction. The enchanted citizenry then merely observe political and electoral spectacles. In the case of Berlusconi, who besides having served as Prime Minister also owns part of the Italian mass media firm Mediaset, political issues and television entertainment converged bringing about a new paradigm with important ramifications for Italian democracy, known as paparazzi democracy (Abruzzese, 1994; Musso, 1994; Statera, 1994; Padovani, 2005 cited in Consentino, 2011, p. 3). These repercussions centre on the demise of political communication and the diffusion of propaganda. Speaking of both post-democracy and paparazzi democracy in the Italian context is valid as one person embodies both being an owner of the main mass media and ran for a political offices. As such it is questionable to what extend the mass media Mediaset can be qualified as 'free'. Regarding 'Paparazzi Democracy' an intrusive attention is brought by entertainment television programmes to the public to restricted information circulating in the political backdrop bearing significant political results (Consentino, 2011, p. 14).

Chapter three set out the constituent elements of Baumier's post-democracy thesis. These elements included two illusions haunting the French citizens. Firstly, French society still believes itself to live in a democratic moment such as it was understood by the French historian Raymond Aron, the 'Aronian moment' (2007, p. 35). The second illusion, held by the radical left and its sympathizers, is that to cure liberal and representative democracy's deficiencies requires a social or radical extension of democratic principles (2007, p. 30). The

following part of chapter three called into question some of Baumier's claims by examining French political identification processes, that is to say ideological versus political party identification; the relationship between ideology and party representation; unveiled similarities between left and right totalitarianism; left and right political affiliation and class consciousness in France. The analysis of French voting behaviour appears to support Baumier's militant account of post-democracy given that electoral behaviour based on ideological identification translates into unstable political coalitions (Bélanger, Lewis-Beck, Chiche and Tiberj, 2006) even as the underlying conduct of elite governance and power remains undisturbed and enforced.

Baumier's conception of the French Republic falling prey to the Left ideology is called into question by Alain de Benoist's (1995) article entitled *End of the Right-Left Dichotomy*. De Benoist's (1995) article addresses the progressive annihilation of the belief in distinct and antagonistic political ideologies by the French citizenry. Moreover, another aspect supporting political dichotomy's rapid decreases is: the declining sentiment of class consciousness in the French context. De Benoist (1995) bases his study of political dichotomy and class consciousness on the French political barometer Sofres Polls.

The next part of the chapter showed which actors and what mechanisms helped in fostering Baumier's post-democratic scenario. First, an important step in consolidating the French post-democratic order had been undertaken by the oligarchy in disregarding the results of the May 2005 European Union referendum. This vote showed division between the oligarchy and the people vis-à-vis the project and ended with the French popular 'No'. Although, the results were acknowledged and made public, the French oligarchy overstepped the citizenry's vote: "We experienced the real division between the oligarchy and the people. We saw the virtual reality of "democracy". The May 2005 referendum was a stage in the expression of post-democracy: the on-going democratic atrophy exposed itself in the broad day light." (Baumier, 2007, p. 59). Second, the power of the oligarchy and its leading part in post-democracy was evidenced as was its collaboration with the media producing a little anticipated result: "Post-Democracy presents a series of aspects leading towards totalitarianism: a unique thought, a diffused, decentralized but unique party, unanimous press [...] an oligarchy relying on its privileges and its belief in a 'truth', propaganda, words and empty ideological discourses that are repeated by habit, description of a virtual world believed to be the real world...there is something reminiscent of the former Soviet Union in the present democratic evolution." (2007, p. 64).

Communitarianism supposedly puts an end to a republic which is conceived as a common good in contemporary post-democracy. Baumier sees communitarianism as a threat, stating that “We assist the inversion of the community idea at the benefice of the resurgence of reintroduced peculiarities at the heart of the Republic under the name of communitarianism. Several self-proclaimed communities claim a “right to difference”, in the name of the Republic [...] not realizing that this claim posits the end of the Republic in terms of a communion bringing together the entirety of the nation in a political entity giving the primacy to the collective good over the individual good.” (2007, p. 272).

The second part of chapter three scrutinized Baumier’s actors. It was revealed that Baumier’s claim regarding the left leaning oligarchy’s overruling of the citizens’ vote was flawed. Given that the French conservative party turned out to be more Europhile than the socialists as well as the fact that the French government was headed by the conservative party are reasons enough to discard Baumier’s statement that left ideology was overruling the people’s vote. Moreover, the usage of referendum did not imply to strengthen the ruling party and/or ideology, but to provide citizens with the opportunity to directly participate in European Union politics. Moving on to communitarianism’s socialist character, it should be noted that this school of political philosophy also features within conservative thoughts: D. Willet (1992, cited in Newman and Zoysa, 1997, p. 630) states that the British Conservative Party conveys communitarian values while expanding the welfare state and advocating the free market. Gray (1993, cited in Newman and Zoysa, 1997, p. 630), who was once a fierce supporter of the radical right, calls for the implementation of Disraeli’s ‘One nation’ concept which still features among present conservative policies. Lastly, Etzioni shows common points between communitarianism and the American Progressive Movement from the beginning 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, communitarianism cannot be attributed solely to one particular political ideology. Used by both conservatives and socialists, communitarianism views individuals as a product of society and not society as a product of individuals claiming rights on false grounds as Baumier suggests.

This thesis attempted to explore two different accounts of post-democracy. First, the theory by Crouch (2004) was laid out for subsequently identifying potential holes. Crouch, in fact, also coined the term post-democracy in the early 2000s when he wrote an analysis of the weakening of Western democracies for the Fabian Society, a British think tank focusing on left political ideas and public policy issues (Fabian Society, 2013): “I then approached the Fabian Society to see whether they would be interested in a general discussion of this

phenomenon. I developed the concept of post-democracy, added a discussion of what seemed to me to be a key institution behind the changes (the global firm), and some ideas for how concerned citizens should respond to the predicament [...]. This was published as *Coping with Post-Democracy* (Fabian Ideas 598, London: The Fabian Society, 2000)” (Crouch, 2004, p. ix). The book explaining the present post-democratic paradigm is entitled *Post-democracy*. Crouch’s will to approach and write a book for this think tank already gives away an important fact: his tendency towards socialist inclined ideas and topics. Although Crouch (2004) never explicitly declares his political affiliation in *post-democracy*, the manner in which politics, public policy, political parties, politicians, economics and economic agents are dealt with and depicted allows one to claim that Crouch belongs to the left of the political spectrum. This claim is further supported by Crouch’s statement regarding the book’s intended audience “It is my contention that we are increasingly moving towards the post-democratic pole. If I am right about this, the factors which I shall identify as causing the movement also help explain something else, of particular concern to the social democrats and others concerned for political egalitarianism for whom this book is principally intended.” (Crouch, 2004, p. 4).

Baumier (2007) wrote a conservative account on post-democracy when compared to Crouch. Although, Baumier deals with post-democracy, he never mentions in the text or in the bibliography the book published by Crouch three years earlier. His book entitled *The Totalitarian Democracy: Thinking the post-democratic Modernity* promises a discussion revolving around the concept of modernity as well as authoritarian aspects of democracy. This promise holds true in the light of analysing democracy; however, the meaning of modernity is not explained and Baumier (2007) does not straightforwardly say that he actually totalitarian democracy in post-modernity.

Having laid out the a short summary of the two key authors, the next sections of this conclusion concentrates on both similarities and differences of the books in question. Two similarities stand out: elections being a staged spectacle and media/journalists joining forces with the political and economic elite. Baumier takes the 2005 French referendum on the European Union constitutional treaty as prime example of staged elections: “May 2005 will remain engraved in French history as the symbolic moment of post-democracy’s apparition: in this regime, expressed choices by the people are endorsed – after having been prepared – or not by the pretending democratic oligarchy, according to whether the people’s choices point in the same direction as do the oligarchy’s choices.” (2007, p. 60). This event then led



Baumier to declare that “We experienced the real division between the oligarchy and the people. We saw the virtual reality of “democracy”.

The May 2005 referendum is a stage in the expression of post-democracy: the ongoing democratic atrophy exposed itself in the broad day light.” (Baumier, 2007, p. 59). Baumier also points to a similar staged election occurring in the early 2000s in the United States: “The same process in other countries, see the United States, during the 2001 presidential election as one part of the votes had not been counted so as that candidate who had to win would win them in a certain manner.” (2007, p. 61). Baumier then goes on to state that the omitting of votes as in the 2001 American presidential election qualifies as a coup d'état while still abiding to democratic principles: “The coup d'état by George Bush still fitted with historic customs which we inherited by democracy: the Republican candidate was not the first politician ascending to power by rigging electoral results. In 2005, the French vote has not been rigged. The problematic is another one: the voting results have been simply ignored, elided. As in the case of the United States one would believe. Except that in the French case, the results have been recognized, formalized, accepted and, nevertheless, these results do not form part of reality.” (2007, p. 61).

Crouch in comparison depicts staged elections in the following scenario: “elections certainly exist and can change governments, public electoral debate is a tightly controlled spectacle, managed by rival teams of professional experts in the techniques of persuasion, and considering a small range of issues selected by those teams.” (Crouch, 2004, p. 4). This specific temporal character of post-democracy also articulates itself in the controlling of public election campaigns voiding them of any sense and only reinforcing its theatrical character all under the supervision of so-called spin doctors: neither any authentic political agenda nor co-operation can emerge giving way to a high degree of politicians' personalization reminiscent of personal cult practiced formerly by people such as Stalin or Mussolini. Citizens adopt a passive, apathetic and intimidated attitude wherewith attempts to form associations fall short, see “The mass of citizens plays a passive, quiescent, even apathetic part, responding only to the signals given them” (Crouch, 2004, p. 4).

The restricted political arena becomes the new playground of the political process where only the government and the elite, synonym for agencies' economic interests, delineate political matters: “Behind this spectacle of the electoral game, politics is really shaped in private by the interaction between elected governments and elites that overwhelmingly represent business interests.” (Crouch, 2004, p. 4). Crouch main preoccupations revolve

around the following scenario “Under the conditions of a post-democracy that increasingly cedes power to business lobbies, there is little hope for an agenda of strong egalitarian policies for the redistribution of power and wealth, or for the restraint of power interests” (2004, p. 4).

Similarly to Baumier, Crouch also denotes a qualitative decrease in journalism: “Popular journalism, like politics, began to model itself on advertising copy; very brief messages requiring extremely low concentration spans...” (2004, p. 26) while the writing style of official documents also underwent a devaluation “...mass-circulation newspaper discussion, government material aimed at the mass public, and party manifestos are totally different. They rarely aspire to any complexity of language or argument” (2004, p. 24). Crouch also hints at the consumerist character of citizens: “we take for granted that a party’s programme is a ‘product’, and that politicians try to ‘market’ us their message” (2004, p. 25). The progression from citizen to a ‘citizen-consumer’ serves as another proof of the change from Keynesianism to neoliberalism and the advent of post-democracy.

The similarity of Crouch’s and Baumier’s account on elections in post-democracy cannot be overlooked. For both authors the division between the elite and the people becomes apparent in the event of elections in terms of outcomes already decided beforehand that suits the elite’s will. The collaborative role of media is addressed by Baumier and Crouch, although in different ways: Baumier sees journalists as collaborators with the left leaning oligarchy that wants to impose its regime. In order to do so, truth is portrayed in a distorted manner wherewith people are manipulated giving plenty of rope to the oligarchy. This freedom occurs at the disadvantage of the people who are not only manipulated but who also undergo transformations. Crouch sees the media as victim of post-democracy and the global firm. The infiltration of the latter into the state progressively empties politics and impacts on the writing style of reports and articles. The hollowing out of politics also turns politicians into empty characters who try to win votes via charisma and not by political programmes. In this sense, the media portrays politicians by evoking their personal qualities and life while aiming to sell a product to the readership without the need to reflect on any political problems or controversies. One last similarity between Crouch and Baumier that can be discerned is the apathy of the citizens and their lack of interest in politics. Both authors point to the changes in the citizenry, Crouch talks of ‘citizen-consumers’ while Baumier seems more absolute in speaking of ‘post-humans’.

Divergences between Baumier's and Crouch's account of post-democracy centre on the state as an institution. In fact, Baumier sees the state as hostage of left ideology, while Crouch sees the state as being hollowed out by global capitalist economics. Baumier states that the predominance of left ideology leads to the diffusion of a single conformist thought and therefore to a totalitarian state. Crouch, in opposition, sees post-democracy not as the empowerment of the state but as its hollowing out. In fact, economic agents infiltrate major political parties and hence the government, which then no longer executes tasks that are not in accordance with free-market principles. It is also possible to suggest that the state becomes the direct agent of capitalism. Reflecting on this first divergence, one can say that Crouch blames the global free-market economic framework while Baumier blames left ideology. As such, the two authors blame respectively right and left ideas for post-democracy.

Another divergence centres on social class. Crouch claims that the demise of the British working class goes hand in hand with the demise of democracy. Baumier, on the other hand, claims that communitarianism, that is to say emphasizing groups' rights, is at the origin of post-democracy. Following from this, Crouch views the lack of social class' existence as runaway to the unchallenged rule of the free market, while Baumier locates communitarianism as the fragmenting source of democracy and therefore as the cradle of post-democracy.

In conclusion, both Crouch (2004) and Baumier (2007) see the spectacularization of elections and politics as a driving force behind post-democracy. Given that Baumier (2007), who is at the right of political spectrum and Crouch, who is at the left of the political spectrum, both identify the spectacularization of elections and politics behind the entrenchment of post-democracy, I conclude that both scholars might be right with their views. The examples of Italy, the United Kingdom, France and the United States as post-democratic regimes given by Baumier (2007) and Crouch (2004) highlight the professionalization of politicians by the use of sound bites in these countries.

The second common point between Crouch's (2004) and Baumier's (2007) analysis is the spectacularization of media. Both Crouch (2004) and Baumier (2004) agree that the elite incorporates spectacularized media so as to manipulate the citizenry. Crouch (2004) gives the example of the usage of sound bites by politicians and the decrease in quality journalism turning the citizens into consumers while for Baumier (2007) the electoral campaign of the May 2005 French Referendum testified the direct cooperation between the elite and journalists.

The observations regarding media's spectacular character are not new. This is a potential criticism of both Crouch (2004) and Baumier (2007). Both Crouch (2004) and Baumier (2007) refer to the spectacularization of media as one of the driving forces behind post-democracy, while Habermas (1962) and Debord (1967) located the advent of mass media / media's spectacular character during Crouch's (2004) high time of democracy in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of media's spectacular characteristics discussed by Crouch's (2004) and Baumier's (2007) were already in existence in the 1950s and 1960s and addressed by Habermas (1962) and Debord (1967).

Since the abandonment of Keynesian demand management and the move to Monetarist management at the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, post-democracy intensified. Habermas (1962) and Debord (1967) already offered insights with their seminal works on public spheres and the media into post-democracy. Yet, both Crouch (2004) and Baumier (2007) substantially contributed to the post-democratic concept of earlier writers. So, Baumier's (2007) and Crouch's (2004) concepts are valuable.

The difference between Crouch's (2004) and Baumier's (2007) post-democracy may simply reflect that Crouch (2004) writes about the United Kingdom and Baumier (2007) about France. In contrast to France, the United Kingdom underwent Thatcherite deregulation that caused inequalities to rise. As such, both countries have distinct political, economic and societal trajectories. This conclusion raises the question whether Crouch (2004) is right about post-democracy in the United Kingdom and Baumier (2007) in France. In my view, this conclusion is wrong. Baumier's (2007) account of post-democracy in France is flawed as he only offers his emotional opinion without any academic credibility. In my view, Crouch's (2004) account on post-democracy as the capitalist hollowing out of the state is more convincing due to the presented arguments.

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