# The Use of Civic Engagement to Build Trust in Governance

William W. Bauser, Assistant Professor Ethics and Governance, Dean College

**Abstract**:
This is a time in mankind's history were cultural wars are predominate and people are frustrated by their inability to change the current status of civic engagement so that they can find good governance. This paper traces the positions in civic engagement of the cognitivist and non cognitivist and the limitations of each and how these limitations lead to the frustrations of diverse groups and diverse individuals as they civically engage in civil society issues. This paper finally concludes by advancing a methodology that can be used to build trust back into good governance.

## Introduction

This is a period in mankind's history were cultural wars are predominate. No matter were we turn, we can find a plethora of diverse races, creeds, nationalities and genders pursuing their tangible political power to have their needs met. This quest of existence, rights and justice by different groups and individuals has caused tensions with perceived tangible values of individuals and groups who perceive their tangible political power threatened by those of diverse cultural backgrounds. This point is made by Duncan Watts who points out; "In recent years, diversity and tension have characterized aspects of the social scene.(Watts 2006)" These tangible political power struggles are causing a perceived mistrust between those who see themselves as "in" and members of the Herd with those who see themselves as being "outside" the membership of the Herd. These tangible political power battles between those who perceive themselves as being members of the Herd instinct with those who see themselves as excluded from their existence, rights and justice in the Herd has caused political institutions to be unable to apply services equally. This inability of political institutions to render equal services has caused political institutions to ask how they build trust amongst these diverse segments of the population who mistrust each other in order that these political institutions can have the ability to govern.

The inability of political institutions to govern civil society however lies within the individuals who are members of a diverse social culture and who are similar to Shakespeare's Hamlet (Online NewsHour) whereby members of a social culture have innate tensions between rationality and emotional consciousness. As James Madison writes in his Federalist Paper #10, "The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society ("In the fourth Printing of the Great Books, James Madison Federalist Number 10.") Consequently, the tenor of what mankind is experiencing as individuals and groups who are engaging in a civil society in not only political discourse but also in social dialogue lies within the perceptions of how diverse members of a particular race, gender, creed and nationality understand their tangible status within a given culture.

What has been demonstrated continually in all political and social discourse is that diverse members of a culture want to be treated in a civil manner. The treatment of civility that diverse individuals and groups are demanding today lies in the expectations of receiving respect for their engagement in a culture of what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior within a given culture. For example, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has anti-bigotry program which it calls "No Place For Hate." Many communities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts participate in this program in an attempt to diminish the tensions not only in the issue of human rights but also to give respect to diverse groups who are engaged within their communities. Yet, the ADL'S inability to recognize the historical event of the Armenian Genocide has caused a controversy with many of the communities of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with what the Ottoman Turkish Empire deliberately rendered upon the Armenian's (Kaprielian and

Dershowitz 2007).   This pursuit by diverse groups to receive respect for their engaged behavior lies however, not in ethics initially but in what is called etiquette.   Unlike ethics which is concerned with what is expected through rational or emotional actions or thoughts, etiquette is concerned with polite behavior and represents a societies decision process of how it is to appear in and to the public and how the society is to engage in social transactions. (Pojman 2006)  As George Washington has left History in one of his historical documents; "every action done in company ought to be with some sign of respect to those that are present." (The Patriot Post)  The above mentioned controversy is an example of how civility can cause differing group interests to separate communities with conflicts over ethical issues by not basically demonstrating etiquette practices.

However, one approach that has been exercised to bring civility back into society has been the grassroots method of civic engagement.  This grassroots method of civic engagement has been developed to bring trust back into government by having diverse individuals and groups participate in the political process but the political grassroots approach has elevated the mistrust in human nature between different cultural perspectives as diverse cultural points of view engage in civic activities who live together as a civil society of from many comes one.  Consequently, civic engagement has derived several definitions which attempt to clarify its approach within a subjective and objective perspective of what constitutes good governance and good politics.

Civic engagement has been defined as variety educational activities which include experiential curriculum, service learning, advocacy, volunteerism, lobbying, communication, and participating in public and non-profit institutions.  Yet, each of these definitions have ran into

involvement barriers of being tangibly overly concerned with physical outcomes, problems rather than solutions, cultural differences, perceptions that bigger is better and with perceptions that the current way of doing things is acceptable without critical analysis and creative alternatives. Finally a lack of emotional attachment because any and all civic engagement in a civil society has been cognitively and non-cognitively perceived as being separate and distinct from any social and human capital input and government instruction.

This problem of being able to connect diverse grassroots social and human capital along with political involvement can be said to have its difficulties in the question of whether ethical principles could have any truth values. This dilemma of whether ethical principles are either objective or subjective can be described as the moral realism versus the moral antirealism problem were realism would maintain that ethical facts exist as tangible distinct knowable facts which as a cognitivist would maintain have propositional value. Yet, an anti-realist would claim that ethical facts do not exist which as a non cognitivist would hold that there are no truth values in ethical judgments.

Both of these positions have been an attempt to liberate human nature from the position of distrust in human nature that has been pursued over the recent years were the traditional perspective of bureaucracies was to oppose any civic engagement other than what it determined to be needed. Civic engagement in civil society is becoming the means through which good governance and good government is attempted to be determined through the control of the community. With this being said, let us turn to how both of these positions are attempting to establish good governance and good government.

The Cognitivist Position

The realist as a cognitivist in pursuing good governance and good government through civic engagement as naturalism would claim that any and all interaction between individuals and groups would be demonstrated in factual terms that represent natural properties of the parties who are engaged in an issue as self-maintenance versus self aggrandizement. How can I achieve what I want while still remaining within a stable society? This naturalist endeavor of civic engagement is the battle ground between subjective realizations of natural facts through individual or social definitions of what are good governance and good government and objective realizations of natural facts which are separate from any individual or social definition of what is good governance and good government.

For a realist as a subjective cognitive naturalist, individuals are perceived as within the tradition of human nature were individuals are born with a passive intellect or blank mind and learn what good governance and good government is through imitating the experiences and practices of what the culture he or she is materially raised in. Yet, this tangible and material upbringing of individuals within a given culture can come into conflict with others with a different cultural understanding and upbringing of what constitutes good governance and good government. Civil society becomes a diverse entity whereby any and all civic engagement becomes a constant struggle to derive common standards were different individuals and groups can function. Each member of a particular cultural perspective perceives their understanding and upbringing as being the respected process of good governance and good government. Who is to decide what is right or wrong within a society varies between each cultural segment and good governance and good government would remain relative to that particular segment of society.

Consequently, any attempt to find a common ground or universal approach to any and all civic engagement would fail to derive any valid objective standards. This form of civic engagement can be understood as an ethical relativistic approach to civic engagement. As John Ladd points out; "Ethical relativism is the doctrine that the moral rightness and wrongness of actions varies from society to society and that there are no absolute universal moral standards binding on all men at all times. Accordingly, it holds that whether or not it is right for an individual to act in a certain way depends on or is relative to the society to which he belongs."(Ladd 1973) The conclusion to which Ladd's statement points is that there can not be an objective or absolute material common principle to have different individuals or groups civically engage with. What this ethical relativistic position points out is that each culture has its own perspective of human agency and motivation, and since each culture has its own material cultural perspective of what constitutes a civil society, what is deemed acceptable ethical practices within a civil society is based upon that culture. This is what is called the diversity and dependency thesis. (Pojman 2006) However, within a civil society diverse individuals and diverse groups are pursuing not only identity issues but the demand of resources that others in a civil society need. This has become highly contentious because of the concern of who gets what and how. As Robert Putman; "…but I think it is fair to say that most (though not all) empirical studies have tended instead to support the so-called 'conflict theory,' which suggests that, for various reasons-but above all, contention over limited resources-diversity fosters out-group distrust and in-group solidarity. (Putnam 2007)" Consequently, any attempt at civic engagement ends up being a confrontation about whose bull is being gourd and how a perceived out-group or out-individual is going to get his or her volition satisfied or their fair share of resources. Since each in-group or in-individual is concerned about protecting their perceived allowance of resources against a

perceived threat any confrontation within a civil society is perceived as being totally subjective or understood by all as being personal.

This ever so subtle shift from conflicts with and within diverse groups or different individuals to personal confrontations over resources is a subtle shift from perceiving diverse groups and diverse individuals as agents of their culture which function with a purpose to different groups and different individuals who are not agents of their culture but are instruments of their culture who function only in a mechanistic manner without any goal in mind. This mechanistic approach to civic engagement is not based on vision of humans as exceptions in nature but is based on an anti-humanistic sentiments in culture and as such any ethical civic engagement becomes a process of modest or no inter or intra-personal critical thinking. What is driving these diverse groups or diverse individuals to react to the pressures of a civil society is not some innate idea but the historical experiences to which the groups or individuals have perceived to be the deterrent to their becoming successful in a civil society. As civil society is seen in such a manner any and all civic engagement ends up into a solipsistic chaotic civil society but begins in skepticism and transforms itself through an ethical nihilism to the belief that all of civil society is about me and the fulfilling of my personal needs.

An ethical skeptic would tell us that even if there were any norms of civil society, it would be absurd to hold to the position that any such norms exist. As J. L. Mackie would maintain, "The denial of objective values will have to be put forward…as an 'error theory,' a theory that although most people in making moral judgments implicitly claim, among other things, to be pointing to something objectively prescriptive, these claims are all false."(Mackie

1977)  Mackie's point is that since there are no universal ethical norms to which all cultures adhere to cultural norms are only relativistic culturally and since all values are culturally relative it would be absurd to maintain that any ethical norms are independent from the particular culture. Consequently, Mackie would maintain as a skeptic that we should practice Ockham's law of parsimony and we should act as "we should never employ a plurality of entities without necessity. (Tornay 1938)" Unfortunately, this position appears to not recognize Ockham's position that "the passion of the soul is the act of intellect itself. (Tornay 1938)"   However, Mackie's position of ethical skepticism can be influencing the above mentioned controversy between the Armenian Community and the Anti Defamation League's (ADL) position regarding the genocide that culture experienced at the hands of the Turks during the Ottoman Empire. Even though the tide of opposition to the ADL's position has caused the Anti-Defamation League to recognize that the genocide against the Armenian's did happen, it has refused to hold the Turks responsible for the acts for geo-political reasons.  And, the Turkish Government is pursuing a very strong coherent system of strategic geo-political lobbying effort along with the State Department of the United States to not have any political institution to recognize the genocide as a fact because of geo-political reasons.  This geo-political lobbying endeavor by the Turkish Government has caused one Armenian to state regarding whether the genocide will ever be recognized as a fact of value "that he will believe it when he sees it." (O'Brien 2007)

To buttress the logical positivism of scientific rationality and human exceptionalism, Gilbert Harman brings civic society and civic engagement to its most radical stance of ethical nihilism through an ethical relativism position.  Harman tells us that, "We have seen that observational evidence plays a role in science and mathematics it does not seem to play in ethics.

Moral hypotheses do not help explain why people observe what they observe.  So ethics is problematic and nihilism must be taken seriously.  Nihilism is the doctrine that there are no moral facts, no moral truths, and no moral knowledge.  This doctrine can account for why reference to moral facts does not seem to help explain observation, on the grounds that what does not exist cannot explain anything." (Harman 1979)  Harman would contend that any ethical beliefs are based on an individual's upbringing and are individual's personal moral sentiments about what the individual is experiencing and is a well-designed political approach of foretelling how useful an individuals feelings work in civil society.  Since these personal feelings are distinct from any observation they cannot be challenged with any critical assessment and as such are hidden in secrecy of an individual's upbringing.  An example of Harman's position in a civil society and in civic engagement can be seen in the debate over the Executive Office of the United States Governments use of secrecy in order to protect the United States from terrorist attacks which includes the use of torture to gather information about the security of the United States.  As William Richter and Frances Burke relate; "When government operates in secret, the ability of the public to hold the government accountable is imperiled," (Richter and Burke 2007) and likewise, when individuals who are civically engaged in a civil society are projecting their personal moral sentiments into an issue without those personal feelings being able to be assessed as to there right or wrongness, civil society can be said to be placed at risk by those who express the various forms of egoism, self-interest and altruism of ethnocentricity. (Pojman 2006)

To counter the above chaotic stance of the naturalist subjective relativism perception has been the conventional relativism position to which many who belief in moderate political change and social change by government actions find appealing to civic engagement.  Conventional

ethical relativism maintains that a civil society and all civic engagement in the social relationships of a culture have no objective ethical norms but have valid ethical norms that are made true by virtue of the civil society's practices of their cultural perceptions of rightness and wrongness of civic behavior. (Pojman 2006)  The advantage that Conventional Ethical Relativism has over the other relativistic theories is that the social norms of a civil society are standards were diverse groups can participate in with the perception of tolerance for the differences that each different group or different individuals bring to civic engagement.  The proponents of Conventional Ethical Relativism maintain that its strength lies in the tolerance for diversity which brings forth a stronger perception *E Pluribus Unum* or a better moral sentiment regarding the meaning of **WE** as a belief that more contact between different groups or different individuals renders social cohesion.  As Putnam points out; "As we have more contact with people who are unlike us, we overcome our initial hesitation and ignorance and come to trust them more" (Putnam 2007) and what this increase in trust in others who are different engenders is grassroots networks with a common endeavor for political and social change.  There are many examples of the results of this grassroots networking from local, state and national platforms. There are local communities who have brought diverse grassroots networks together to decide whether to have a strong or weak police chief (Town of Wrentham 2007) or to allow legalized gambling within the community's town limits. (Town of Middleborough 2007)  There are States who have pursued the contact theory by pursuing social and political change in such activities as whether Civil Unions be allowed within its boundaries (Commonwealth of Massachusetts 2004) and whether to have casinos within its borders to become an economic resource for the State. (Baxandall and Sacerdote 2005)  On the national level, we have witnessed diverse groups and different individuals coming together to change the direction of a Government's policy over the

direction of a war and we are witnessing National Political Parties using conventional relativism to empower their political agenda. (Watts, 2006)

However, these endeavors of civic engagement for social and political change are perceived as not how diverse groups and diverse individuals are governing themselves but how civil society finds harmony through government actions and how the diverse groups and different individuals perceive themselves as the government, the **WE**, who do not have all the resources at their disposal to insure that the common choice of cultural values are both enriched and empowered. This inability of diverse groups and diverse individuals to govern themselves because of a lack of resources at their disposal to insure the good governance of their chosen cultural values causes the members of civil society to distrust their thinking capacity to have access and development to a balanced society were the protection of the rights of diverse groups and diverse individual in developing a consensus of good governance is challenged by the actions of a majority of the civil society. It is at this point in time that both diversity and unity participants turn to a particular system of collectively enforced social systems which are made legitimate by the reasonableness of the collective social system as an object of agreement. As Duncan Watts tells us; "Liberty ultimately depends more on the political culture of any culture than on any written proclamation." (Watts, 2006)

At this point, however, is where diverse groups and different individuals run into problems and conflicts with civic engagement activities within a civil society as part of an institutionalized governmental agenda. The first example to which I can relate you to is where diverse groups and diverse individuals come to have problems and conflicts with a collective

social system as an object of agreement is a quality of life issue. The ability for a civil society to accept alternative viewpoints regarding what constitutes a marriage between two individuals was challenged when the House of Representatives proposed a Legislative Amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by proposing a definition of marriage. House Bill 3190 stated, "It being the public policy of this Commonwealth to protect the unique relationship of marriage in order to promote, among other goals, the stability and welfare of society and the best interest of children, only the **union** of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Massachusetts. Any other relationship shall not be recognized as a marriage or its legal equivalent." (Commonwealth of Massachusetts 2003) This proposed amendment to the Commonwealth's Constitution caused a fire storm, and groups and individual with diverse perspectives quickly civically engaged and lined up on opposite sides regarding what the definition of marriage should be. The opposing views which each side civically engaged in soon became a court challenge. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court gave a ruling that the propose Legislative Amendment by the House and the Legislative Amendment proposed by the Senate would violate the Ninth Amendment of the United Sates Constitution and the Marriage Laws of the Commonwealth by stating that "separate in seldom, if ever, equal," and "For no rational reason the marriage laws of the Commonwealth discriminate against a defined class; no amount of tinkering with language will eradicate that stain"…"The civil unions bill would have the effect of maintaining and fostering a stigma of exclusion that the Constitution prohibits." (Lewis 2004) But, this decision did not inhibit disagreement. Scott McClellan a spokesman for President Bush stated that "Activist judges continue to seek to redefine marriage by court order without regard for the will of the people," and the then Republican Governor Romney pursued the state constitutional amendment route by declaring

that "We've heard form the court, but not from the people." (Lewis 2004) The battle lines between interpretative and non-interpretative approaches to the intent of the Constitution, to which we will discuss later, had been engaged. After much rancor within the Commonwealth over this civic social quality of life, a joint session of both Houses of the Legislature rejected the definition of marriage as between a man and a woman. This would have seemed to have put a end to the issue but the issue of what tangible object would be seen as tolerance was raised and the intolerance was raised to such an extent that those who were defeated with the rejection of the Legislative Amendment have threaten to target for defeat at election not only those who voted to reject the Amendment but also those who had a change of conscious a voted to reject the Amendment. Consequently, the idea of indulgence of those who have alternative perspectives to what constitutes a quality of life that conventional relativism would maintain appears to be in jeopardy in civic engagement and civil society.

The second point that I can relate you to the effectiveness of the conventional relativism position regarding civic engagement is the question of whether reformers are telling the truth about the need for change. W. C. Thiesenhusen in his article "Difficulties and tensions in institutionalizing grassroots and other civil society organizations during the transformation and post-reform periods" (Thiesenhusen 2005) tells us that the reliability of civically engaged grassroots organizations for land reform run into difficulties with individuals who receive their land because the new owners believe that all the issues that the reformers were engaged in have been resolved and there is no longer a need for them to be civically engaged with the land reformers. Also, when the new land owners run into issues with civil society or with government institutions, the reformers fail to have the expertise to help the new land owner with the issues.

Consequently, what was once considered to be a valid approach that the land reformers were utilizing to retain land for the owner is no longer considered to be a meaningful approach in aiding the land owner with his property and civic engagement is no longer considered to be needed. With this being said, what can conventional relativism say about reformers who are civilly disobedient to what the majority of the civil society maintains as an acceptable manner of living and what can be said about those reformers who fail to maintain the reforming point of view.

This leads me to relate to you the final point regarding conventional relativism. Conventional relativism would adhere to what might be called a non-interpretive decision making process regarding legal issues. A non-interpretive assessment of legal issues does not hold fast to a written set of precedence, but allows information and enforcement considerations to be considered outside of legal precedent. (Ely 2002) What usually materializes in controversial issues is a conflict between the commitment and desire of a civil society and diverse groups and different individuals who have opposing positions of civil society. The passions and needs that become in conflict in the civic engagement of civil society and the different groups and diverse individuals become a loyalty question for each side in the dispute. Each group in the dispute is looking for a tangible support of the outcome to such an extent that each expects the other to obey the legal resolution. But, as we have already seen in the dispute regarding Civil Unions in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, this expectation of commitment to the legal resolution is not necessarily fulfilled by all the parties in the dispute. Civil society in the rejection by the joint session of both Legislative Houses is expecting that the constituents of the Commonwealth will bide by the decision of the courts and the legislature and recognize the

equal rights of all the citizens of the State regarding the marriage laws. Yet, the those groups and individuals who were on the negative side of the ruling still are maintaining to be civilly disobedient by claiming that have a legal natural right to their position by pursuing political remedies to over turn civil society's position regarding the definition of marriage. This political remedy pursuit by those who maintain the marriage should be defined as a relation between a man and a woman has caused many Legislatures who initially supported the definition of marriage between a man and a woman and who changed their vote out of consciousness in favor of the majority of civil society to be targeted by their constituency for election confrontation for their vote. This has caused many of those Legislatures who had changed their vote to explain their loyalty to their constituencies and to overall civil society's expectations. This angst that these Legislatures are experiencing is an example of what objective naturalist would maintain is a limitation in civic engagement of conventional relativism. As the naturalist objectivist would maintain, who am I to maintain ones loyalty to, an individuals issue base or civil society's desires since both have a legitimate contention to pursue their position.

Since the objectivist would maintain that the relativist position in civic engagement leads to a continual stress in society between what is the right and wrong social decision, the objectivist argues that any and all civic engagement needs to be based on some self-governing civil society decision making process. The objectivist addresses the decision making process of civic engagement as an interpretative approach where a strict understanding of the cultural perceptions of what is acceptable or unacceptable social behavior within the culture is to be maintained by an allegiance to an independent tangible object in social deliberations in civil society. In communities were diverse perspectives regarding nationality, race, creed, gender and

with the non-monolithic social perspectives that each of the diverse groups and diverse individuals maintain, the objectivist needs to demonstrate how a distinct tangible purpose will resolve issues with different groups and different individuals. One method that the objectivist utilizes is the non-naturalist position of a religion which has a commitment to a divine revelation of a noble savage as the basis of civic engagement. Carl Henry points out that "Biblical ethics discredits an autonomous morality. It gives theonomous ethics its classic form-the identification of the moral with Divine will. In Hebrew-Christian revelation, distinctions in ethics reduce to what is good or what is pleasing, and to what is wicked or displeasing to the Creator-God alone," (Henry 1957) and as Rick Warren quotes from the New Living Translation of the Bible regarding 2 Chronicles 16.9 to make his purpose, "the eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." (Warren 2002) This commitment to a divine will is the basis of the Divine Command Theory in religious ethics and as such expects those of the faithful to full their pre designed purpose in civic engagement without any need for an independent verification of their position. This denial of any self-governing principle except for the words of a divine revelation leaves any civic engagement within a civil society with a position of my way or the highway stance were the battlegrounds between passion and desire become tyrannically sustained in civic involvement. We have currently experienced this position with the moral majorities' positions regarding, for example, abortion, family values and the definition of marriage, and in the position of the radical Islamic believers in their war cry for a Jihad. Consequently, any and all attempts at civic engagement end up as a confrontation and a crisis between diverse groups and diverse individuals.

To counter the above super naturalistic position, an objectivist would maintain that there is a natural law principle which would state that there is an absolute timeless ethical belief which as a norm is ontologically perfect or as a modified natural law objectivist that all ethical norms are not necessarily ontologically ideal but can be sufficiently ontologically complete. An example of the former absolutist can be seen in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas is following in the tradition of Aristotle who would maintain that human beings have a specific nature, reason and role in civil society and civic engagement. As Aristotle tells us; "Whether, then, the perfect and supremely happy man has one or more activities, the pleasures that perfect these will be said in the strict sense to be pleasures proper to man, and the rest will be so in a secondary and fractional way, as are the activities," (In the fourth printing of the Great Books, Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics) and "Concerning being as truth and nonbeing as falsity, being is true if it is a united being but false if it is not united. But in the case of what is one, if it is just a being, it exists in just this way, and if not in this way, it does not exist, and truth about each such being is the conception of it, and there is neither falsity nor mistake about it but only ignorance, yet not the kind of ignorance which like blindness, for blindness exists as if one were to have no power to conceive of it at all." (Apostle 1979) Aquinas continues this tradition of absolutism by telling us, "It is natural for the perfect to come before the imperfect, as act comes before potentiality; for whatever is in potentiality is made actual only by something actual. And since God first created things not only for their own existence, but also that they might be principles of other things, so creatures were produced in their perfect state to be the principles as regards others. Now man can be the principle of another man, not only by corporal generation, but also by instruction and government. Hence, just as the firsts man was produced in his perfect bodily state for the work of generation, so also was his soul established in a perfect state to instruct and

govern others." (Pegis 1945) Consequently, we do not in civic engagement pursue goodness because we desire it but we pursue goodness in civic engagement because goodness is a commitment to perfection in-itself for human prosperity.

However, in a diverse civil society there are going to be issues were diverse groups and different individuals are going to become civically engaged in issues were doing a good thing will also produce a bad consequence for the natural law absolutist. We have experienced this situation in the United States over the abortion issue. For an absolutist, an ethically right act must meet four criteria: (a) the nature of –of-the act condition were the act must be either ethically good in-itself or have an indifferent intent, (b) the means-end condition were a bad effect must not be the means by which an individual or group achieves their good effect, (c) the right-intention condition were an individuals or groups intention for achieving the good effect must be the purpose of the group or individual and any and all bad effects are unintended results or if the result is predictable it must be unintended, (d) the proportionality condition were the good result must be at least comparable in substance to the evil result. (Pojman 2006) Consequently, a natural law absolutist would maintain that deciding to have an abortion is in violation of the sanctity of life were life is a good in-itself because the decision violates the conditions of what is perceived to be an inalienable natural ethical right.

However, the natural law modest objectivist would retort the natural law absolutist by stating that the mandated conditions of ethical right conduct that the natural law absolutist maintain are counterintuitive to the norms of rational human beings. The modest objectivist would tell us that the standards of rational human beings contain the following premises: (a) that human nature is similar in all rational human beings because rational human beings have a

common set of basic volitions, (b) ethical standards are the function of human volition which is organized by reason to meet the volitions of human beings and to advance the most significant volitions of rational beings, (c) some ethical standards will meet and advance human volitions better than other ethical standards,  (d) Ethical standards that will ideally meet and advance the most important volitions in most advantageous manner are objectively valid ethical standards, (Pojman 2006) and this ethical decision making process is far more rational in making ethical judgments in civic engagement because a rational person can immediately grasp the rightness or wrongness of a particular act as representing an universal condition.  As Immanuel Kant tells us in his <u>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,</u> "When I conceive a hypothetical imperative in general, I do not know beforehand what it will contain-until its condition is given.  But if I conceive a categorical imperative, I know at once what it contains.  For since besides the law this imperative contains only the necessity that our maxim, which is a subjective principle of action which is determined by reason in accordance with the conditions of the individuals level of information or personal inclinations, should conform to this law, while the law, as we have seen, contains no condition to limit it, there remains nothing over to which the maxim has to conform except the universality of a law as such; and it is the conformity alone that the imperative properly asserts to be necessary." (Paton 1956)

To return to the abortion example, what these two civic engagement methods give us is a case in point of were two points of view over an issue become tyrannically emotionally charged over a perspective of what constitutes an inalienable right to life.  The natural law absolutist would maintain that the right to life is a necessary condition which cannot be ethically violated at all and were any emotional intelligence, attitudes and moods of human beings cannot be considered.  The modest natural law objectivist would maintain that the right to life is a

sufficient condition which can be violated if a rational condition outweighs in importance another rational condition, and as we have witnessed in Roe versus Wade, that a fetus is not considered life in a particular term, then there is a rational basis to pursue an abortion. Both of these approaches to civic engagement and civil society severally limit all attempts at civically reconciling differences because they mistrust human nature.

The Non Cognitivist Position

The battle ground between commitment and desire in civic engagement for a cognitivitist lies in the realization of natural or non natural external properties to which can be determined by reason to which inheres the content of truth in the decision making process in the civil society to which has a controlling construction were social or individual perspectives demand a conformity to their system of thinking without allowing for individual decision making. The noncognitivist would maintain on the other hand that the cognitivist have been tyrannical in their method which does not allow for individual choices to be made in civic engagement and would claim that human nature needs to be redefined as the possibility of the choices that individuals make by their emotional intelligences and pro or con attitudes which are not facts but subjective sentiments.

The individual who is utilizing his or her subjective emotions to emote about what he or she is claiming to know about in a contextual situation, for example, is afraid that if and only if I do not torture an individual who claims the he or she hates me, then I will not know the reason of their hate, can only have meaning if and only if the emotional statement can be systematically verified. However, how can an individual be assured that what he or she emotes about is a reason that can be verified? The answer that an antirealist would give is that what an individual

emotes about can not be verified as factual information but expresses an attitude about the sentiments of the individual. (Pojman 2006) The reason for the inability to verify what an individual is emoting about is based upon that what an individual reveals in the first person is not based upon an implication between verifiable facts but is a temporal causal statement of individuals' feelings. Consequently, when individuals are revealing their emotions in civic engagement on an issue in civil society, for example, that an abortion is a good act or that an abortion is a bad act, individuals are stating imperative sentiments regarding an issue to which is perceived as a causal condition of acceptability or unacceptability regarding the volitions of the individuals. These statements of imperative sentiments in civic engagement become individuals' persuasive attempt at getting others to agree with their opinions. The persuasive attempt at getting others to agree with an opinion in civic engagement is perceived by the opposition as an attempt to have the opposition to conform to a particular point of view.

The attempt at finding an alternative approach to the conformity issues that emotivism demonstrates in civic engagement was developed by another form of emotivism which is called prescriptivism. A prescriptivist would agree with an emotivist in that ethical statements do not have factual truth value but are attitudinal but would not agree with the emotivist that ethical statements should acceptable or not acceptable, but that an individual needs to control his or her emotions so that the individual can make principled judgments which can be universally applicable in making ethical decisions.

R. M. Hare is an example of prescriptivism and he maintains that there are "three most important truths about moral judgments and these are that (1) ethical decisions are prescriptive which (2) logically communicate (3) universalizability. (Hare 1963) How this works in involving individuals in civic engagement in a civil society is that both sides of an issue make a choice to

add to their position an extra criterion of orientation to their value judgments which becomes their ethical standard. The extra criterion of orientation is a bi-conditional universal ethical imperative such as if and only if marriage is a moral act between a man and a woman. For a singular event to be an example of the bi-conditional universal ethical imperative, a singular event needs be existentially substantiated as a member of the choice of the universal extra criterion of orientation. For example, this marriage is between this man and this woman and is an example of the universal ethical imperative. Consequently, an ethical and moral marriage is necessarily between a man and a woman. A violation of this ethical standard can be state as; any marriage that is not between a man and a woman is unethical and immoral act and should not be permitted. Civil unions are an example of marriages that are not between a man and a woman and are unethical and immoral acts. Consequently, civil unions are not permitted.

The civic engagement issue becomes based upon the interpretive status of a written document which states the acceptable universal ethical acts in a civil society. We saw this situation in the controversial issue over the definition of marriage that the Massachusetts Legislature undertook to apply as a standard of conduct regarding marriages within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The problem becomes in civic engagement one of which both sides make choices regarding universal extra criterion and both sides claim to have the moral and ethical high ground in the choice that they have made. And, as we saw in the debate regarding the legitimacy of what is a marriage, regardless of a decision with an issue, diverse groups and diverse individuals cannot resolve an issue because of the superfluous standards that are added to their positions. Consequently, any and all civic engagement remains in controversary in a civil society and harmony between diverse groups and diverse individuals remains confrontational

because of their universal interpretive acceptability of their extra criterion orientation that is maintained by each diverse group as the only acceptable standard of ethical conduct.

The final point that an anti-realist would make regarding civic engagement is that diverse individuals project their tangible emotions and attitudes into the civil society while being members of that civil society by projecting the existential individual's ethical standards into a civil society as a matter of a temporal choice. The temporal choice of the existential individual is a prescriptive role of a bi-conditional extra criterion orientation which is concerned with the context that the possibilities of experience have to offer as passage to authenticity in performance in the present context. Others are not a collective of substantive information but are members of band of like minded individuals whose information is an inner tool for the individual to realize his or her authenticity in the world as a continuum to the existential individual's authentic existence. The existential individual projects a concern in civic engagement with a concern with his or her performance as being recognized for his or her creative approaches in challenging the standards of a civil society while at the same time ordering and reordering the challenging experience into a creative self mechanical system to get what he or she wills.(Pojman 2006)

The projectivist brings to civic engagement an extra criterion standard orientation which is highly a technological mechanistic system of grassroots information regarding his or her agenda. The agenda of the projectivist is concerned with developing an intuitive political strategic winning plan through the pursuit of gathering the ethical and moral sentiments of others by storytelling and image orientation which projects the chosen sentiments of the projectivist. The grassroots information system becomes a network of empathetic individuals who dispose and gather information throughout the technological system in order to adjust the priscriptivist's image to any divergent input to the system so the priscriptivist can candidly respond creatively to

any divergent information. This learning process for the projectivist allows the noncognitivist to existentially know at any given moment were he or she stands within the populace and it also allows the anti-realist to continually adjust his or her position to a successfully perceived orientation of the present.

The outcome of this form of civic engagement is that the prescriptivist either has a winning or losing agenda. The winning position is perceived as having the right ethical sentiments of civil society and the losing position is perceived as a character flaw which needs to be creatively reexamined in light of the sentiments of the populace. Further, since this anti-realist is constantly in the now by creatively adjusting his image and agenda to the ethical and moral sentiments of populace, the presriptivist has to do on the job learning in how to govern which could leave the projectivist in an anxious state of affairs with how to successfully maintain his grassroots support in civic engagement when dealing with issues that his grassroots base does not support. This has a tendency to leave civic engagement in disarray with even the projectivist support base feeling rejected. This status of civic engagement allows the opposition to take advantage of the situation and to pursue a confrontational approach to civic engagement which causes unrest and distrust in civil society.

Conclusion

There should be no wonder why so many people are frustrated and want change in civic engagement in a civil society with the limited results that both cognitive and non cognitive methods of civic engagement render when both approaches are utilized to resolve conflicting points of view. In conclusion, I would like to address the issue of how we can utilize practical and working solutions to build trust back into governance through the use of civic engagement.

The current status of civic engagement is similar to what Plato found attractive in his voyage to Syracuse. In a time were emotional political issues become caught up with how governments rule rather than with good governance, how can civil society become civically engaged to change the current tyranny of governments for the better? An approach that I want to express is the civic engagement with tangible human capital knowledge networks and with intangible social capital value networks to create a value network which can have a working cipher elucidation of good governance through the use of the 3-D virtual world of second-life which can demonstrate through a cost benefit analysis practical solutions to how to build trust back into governance.

The tangible human capital knowledge networks are the worldviews that diverse groups and diverse individuals have familiarity, awareness or understanding which has been expanded upon through the tacit experience of emotional intelligences and through formal education that is thought about by organizing the thinking of the diverse groups and different individuals into a network of content knowledge.(Allee 2003) The intangible social capital value network is the context values that are produced by the relationships the individuals or groups develop for the purpose of maintenance and advancement or for the purpose of solving problems that are encountered in a civil society. (Putnam 2002) The joint content and context networks produce a value network which is the thinking about the content and context values and which becomes a totality of the possibility of a cipher. The cipher is a purpose of transforming all realities, all beliefs into a speculative working elucidation of governance. (Jaspers 1971) Finally, the cipher is placed into the 3-D second-life virtual world game so that the diverse groups or diverse individuals can see what they have created and were the different groups and different can analyze and evaluate their product as to the cost benefit of establishing trust back into

governance. Once this transformation is established as a model for good governance, the model

becomes a civically engaged practical approach for establishing trust back into good governance.

**Reference List**

Allee, V. 2003. *The future of knowledge: increasing prosperity through value networks*. New
York: Butterworth      Heinemann.
Apostle, H. G. 1979. *Aristotle's metaphysics*. Iowa:  The Peripatetic Press.
Baxandall, P and Sacerdote, B. 2005. *The casino gamble in massachusetts:  full report     and
appendices*. Rappaport          Research, via Harvard,
http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/rappaport/gambling.htm
Commonwealth of Massachusetts, "Uncorrected Proof of the Journal of the Senate in Joint
Session," Commonwealth      of Massachusetts, http://www.mass.gov/legis/jounal/jsj021104.htm
Ely, J. H. 2002. *Democracy and distrust:  a theory of judicial review*. Massachusetts: Harvard
University Press.
Hare, R. M. 1963. *Freedom and reason*. Oxford:  Oxford University Press.
Harman, G. 1979. *The nature of morality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Henry, C. 1957. *Christian personal ethics*.  Michigan:  Eerdmans
Kaprielian, Rachel and Dershowitz, Alan. 2007. "A painful truth." *The Boston Globe*. August 18,
2007, final edition,     Excite, via Boston.com,
http://www.boston.com/neews/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2007/08/18/a _painful_truth
Jaspers, K. 1971. *Philosophy: volume three*. Chicago:  The University of Chicago Press.
Ladd, J. 1973. *Ethical relativism*. California: Wadsworth.
Lewis, Raphael. 2004. "SJC affirms gay marriage: court deems civil unions insufficient." *The
Boston Globe*. February         5, 2004, final edition, Excite, via Boston.com,
        http://www.boston.com/newes/local/massachusetts/articles/2004/02/05/sjc_affirm_gay_m
arriage
Mackie, J. L. 1977. *Ethics: inventing right and wrong*.  New York: Penguin.
O'Brien, Keith, 2007. "Armenian campaign aided by new forces." *The Boston Globe*. August 26,
2007, final edition,     Excite, via Boston.com,
http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2007/08/26/armenian_
        campaign_aided_by_new_ forces
Online NewsHour, "Supreme Court Justice puts Hamlet on Trial," Online NewsHour,
        http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment/jan-june07/hamlet_03-29.html
Paton, H. J. 1956. *Immanuel kant: groundwork of the metaphysic of morals*. New York: Harper
& Row.
Pegis, A. C. 1945. *Basic writings of saint thomas aquinas*. New York: Random House.
Pojman, L. P. 2006. *Ethics: discovering right and wrong*.  California: Wadsworth.
Putnam, R. D. 2002. *Democracy in flux: the evolution of social capital in contemporary society*.
Oxford: Oxford          University Press.
Putnam, R. D. 2007.  *e pluribus unum: diversity and community in the twenty-first century. The
2006 john skytte prize          lecture*. Scandinavian Political Studies 30 (2): 137-174.

Richter, W and F. Burke. 2007. *Combating corruption, encouraging ethics: A practical guide to management ethics*.    New York: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Thiesenhusen, W. 2005. Difficulties and tensions in institutionalizing grassroots and other civil society organizations  during the transformation and post-reform periods: Sustainable Development Department, via FAO  Corporate Document Repository, http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y8999T/y8999t03.htm

Tornay, S. 1938. *Ockham studies and selections*. Illinois: The Open Court Publishing Company.

Town of Middleborough, Massachusetts, "Annual Meeting Warrant, May 3, 2007." Town of Middleborough,        http:www.middleborough.com/

Town Wrentham, Massachusetts, "April 30, 2007 Annual and Special Town Meetings."  Town of Wrentham,  hhtp://www.wrentham,ma.us

The Patriot Post, "The Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation by George Washington," The Patriot Post, http://www.patriotpost.us/

Warren, R. 2002. *The purpose driven life*. Michigan: Zondervan

Watts, D. 2006. *British government and politics:  a comparative guide*.  Edinburgh:  Edinburgh University Press.