Solving Problems vs. Claiming Rights: The Pragmatist Challenge to Legal Liberalism

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SOLVING PROBLEMS VS. CLAIMING RIGHTS: THE PRAGMATIST CHALLENGE TO LEGAL LIBERALISM

WILLIAM H. SIMON*

Recent developments in both theory and practice have inspired a new understanding of public interest lawyering. The theoretical development is an intensified interest in Pragmatism. The practical development is the emergence of a style of social reform that seeks to institutionalize the Pragmatist vision of democratic governance as learning and experimentation. This style is reflected in a variety of innovative responses to social problems, including drug courts, ecosystem management, and “new accountability” educational reform. The new understanding represents a significant challenge to an influential view of law among politically liberal lawyers over the past fifty years. That view, Legal Liberalism, is less a creature of academic theory than an implicit popular jurisprudence of practicing lawyers. It consists of a cluster of ideas associated with the Warren Court, the ACLU, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Ralph Nader, and the legal aid and public defender movements. This Article seeks to reconsider Legal Liberalism in the light of the Pragmatist approach and to offer a tentative appraisal of the newcomer. It begins by explicating the sometimes tacit premises of Legal Liberalism and exploring its shortcomings. It then introduces the contrasting premises of the Pragmatist approach as they appear in a variety of recent works of legal scholarship. It illustrates the Pragmatist approach with a discussion of two case studies – one of drug courts and one of “second generation” employment discrimination remedies. It concludes with some comments about the ambiguities and limitations of Legal Pragmatism.

* Arthur Levitt Professor of Law, Columbia University. I am grateful for advice and support from Alan Morrison, Scott Cummings, Charles Sabel, Michael Dart, Jim Liebman, Orly Lobel, Brad Karkkainen, and Archon Fung, and participants in a workshop at the University of Wisconsin Law School.
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INTRODUCTION

The conventions of judicial and academic discourse encourage legal writing to affect a position above politics. The writer appeals to interpretations of authoritative texts and public values as if they were shared across political perspectives. In fact, of course, both premises and conclusions are hotly contested in most areas of legal discussion, and in many areas they correlate strongly with recognizable political positions. We often think of the political distinction between conservatives and liberals as a central axis of legal controversy.

In this Article, I propose to relax the conventions and focus directly and explicitly on the liberal political perspective from which a large fraction of the bar, and an even larger fraction of the academy, argue in order to examine an interesting development within that perspective. This is the emergence of a new liberal approach to legal issues in substantial tension with, and sometimes openly hostile to, the best-known older approach. The older approach can be called Legal Liberalism. There is no canonical definition of Legal Liberalism, but we know it when we see it. Its tacit indicia include predispositions in favor of plaintiffs in tort and civil rights cases, defendants in criminal cases, consumers in commercial cases, and workers in employment cases. Its explicit elements include the positions and ideas conventionally associated with the Warren Court, the ACLU, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Ralph Nader, and the legal aid and public defender movements.

Until recently, criticism of these ideas has tended to come from outside the more general political orientation with which Legal Liberalism is associated. Legal liberals are liberals in the broader political sense that connotes, first, a scheme of values that gives priority to moderate versions of equality and liberty, and second, a position on the American political spectrum between the middle and the far left. Most criticism of Legal Liberalism has come from conservatives, who tend to dispute the priority liberalism gives to liberty or equality, or from radicals, who tend to dispute liberalism's moderation.
There have been occasional episodes in which a particular tenet of Legal Liberalism has been challenged from within political liberalism. Such disputes tend to generate a good deal of interest and tension. In 1976, for example, Derrick Bell criticized the NAACP's school desegregation strategy as sacrificing the interests of urban blacks in sound education and political efficacy to an ineffectual and dogmatic conception of rights.¹ More recently, a liberal critique has argued that due process protections for criminal defendants associated with the Warren Court unjustifiably impede minority communities from organizing to protect vital interests in neighborhood security.²

A more comprehensive critique in a similar spirit is implicit in a growing body of legal studies invoking or reflecting the tenets of Pragmatism. As philosophical doctrine, Pragmatism is noted for its insistence that thought is instrumental (the truth or value of an assertion lies, not in its correspondence with some ultimate reality, but in what it can do for us) and contextual (assertions should be interpreted in the social circumstances in which they arise). As political theory, especially as elaborated by John Dewey, Pragmatism is noted for its commitment to, and understanding of, democracy as a process of collaborative inquiry and learning.³ Its theoretical commitments lead Pragmatism to resist approaches to legal issues that rely primarily on abstract analytical schemes and methods. Its institutional commitments lead it to resist arrangements that are either centralized and unaccountable on the one hand or anarchically diffuse on the other.

It is doubtful whether, in the abstract, any of these precepts pose serious trouble for Legal Liberalism. Yet, some recent writing has pursued them, not in the abstract, but through studies of innovative responses to social problems. The studies find the Pragmatist spirit in a variety of experiments, including drug courts, ecosystem management, "new accountability" educational reform,

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community policing, international labor standards enforcement, employment
discrimination remediation regimes, and health disparity collaboratives,
among many others. The studies have led to both particular conclusions and
general programmatic approaches that challenge Legal Liberal premises. The perspective of
these studies is by no means the only possible legal version of Pragmatism, but it is the most fully elaborated one.4

In Part I, I offer a picture of Legal Liberalism, inferred from the
dominant tendencies of liberal lawyers' rhetoric of the last fifty
years. Because I am interested in the implicit jurisprudence of
practicing lawyers more than in academic theory, I have relied as
much on journalism and casual observation as I have on scholar-
ship. In Part II, I formulate some of the principal objections to this
discipline from a variety of perspectives, more or less pragmatist in
spirit. Part III elaborates the alternative perspective of Legal
Pragmatism, and Part IV illustrates it with two recent studies—one

4. My picture of Legal Pragmatism is based on IAN AYRES & JOHN BRAITHWAITE,

My apologies to authors included here who feel that my portrait of Legal Pragmatism does
not do justice to the distinctive virtues of their works, and to the authors of many works
omitted who might identify their efforts with it. I have deliberately omitted those for whom
the term pragmatism is simply a synonym for utilitarianism, RONALD DWORKIN, LAW'S EMPIRE
151-53 (1986), or for philistinism, RICHARD POSNER, LAW, PRAGMATISM, AND DEMOCRACY 49-50
and Legal Pragmatism, 113 YALE L.J. 687 (2003) (contrasting Dewey's pragmatism with the
legal theories of Posner and, in passing, Dworkin).
of drug courts by Michael Dorf and Charles Sabel and another of sexual harassment litigation by Susan Sturm. In Part V, I consider some limitations of, or objections to, the pragmatist approach.

I. LEGAL LIBERALISM: AN EXPOSITION

Legal Liberalism consists of six mutually reinforcing premises. Three are background premises—the Victim Perspective, Populism, and the Priority of Rights. Three are practical and strategic. They involve orientations toward the control of information, the choice of legal form between rules and standards, and the structure of procedure.5

A. Background Premises

1. The Victim Perspective

Legal Liberalism sees law as fundamentally concerned with the needs of the wounded and vulnerable. It tends to conflate the realm of law with that of compassion. Among traditional litigants, it is presumptively solicitous of tort plaintiffs and criminal defendants. More recently, the presumption has extended to civil rights plaintiffs and it has sought to extend legal protection to successive new classes of wounded and vulnerable, including abused women, children, the elderly, the mentally ill, the disabled, mistreated workers and tenants, and welfare recipients.6

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5. Legal Liberalism is a heuristic designed to capture the more prominent tendencies in the discourse of liberal lawyers. Although I think Legal Liberalism is the most influential perspective, I do not suggest it has been the only perspective among liberal lawyers. Just as not all liberal lawyers accept this perspective, all those who accept it are not liberals. Indeed, in my experience, politically radical lawyers, who reject the broader political orientation of liberalism, usually think of lawyering in Legal Liberal terms. There is no more reliable expounder of Legal Liberalism than the journal of the National Lawyers' Guild, The Guild Practitioner. Radical lawyers have never developed a distinctive conception of practice.

6. The Victim Perspective is most often an unstated assumption, but there is a substantial literature arguing for it explicitly. See, e.g., Mari J. Matsuda, Looking to the Bottom: Critical Legal Studies and Reparations, 22 HARV. C.R.-C.L. L. REV. 323 (1987). For an overview of the literature, see Devon W. Carbado, Race to the Bottom, 49 UCLA L. REV. 1283 (2002).
The Victim Perspective does not exactly repudiate the traditional premise that law must do justice even when justice is in tension with compassion. Its solicitude for the weak and injured, however, plays a strong background role. It motivates the expansion of law into new domains, and it operates as a presumption in cases of ambiguity or uncertainty. For example, when there is uncertainty about social facts, such as whether the death penalty deters crime or welfare causes family break-up or unemployment, the Victim Perspective resolves such doubts in favor of defendants and recipients generally. In cases of adjudicative facts—the facts of particular disputes, such as whether Clarence Thomas harassed Anita Hill in the manner she alleged—the Victim Perspective resolves such doubts in favor of the more vulnerable contestant. Finally, the Victim Perspective tends to privilege the interpretive constructs that vulnerable people apply to the world over those more commonly adopted by the less vulnerable. If, for example, women experience sexual harassment as part of an organized structure of systemic disadvantage at work, while their employers understand it as a series of isolated, aberrant misfortunes, the former fact alone supports adopting the systemic view.

The Victim Perspective is so ingrained in the discourse of liberal lawyers that we may forget that it is a recent innovation, even within liberalism. In the liberalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, legal rights were associated most basically with the bourgeois property owner. The nineteenth century labor movement was ambivalent as to whether its members' interests would be served by conceiving and protecting them as legal rights.\footnote{See generally \textit{William E. Forbath, Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement} 1-9 (1991).} Regardless of how it came out on this issue, the labor movement's core projects of organization and bargaining were not designed to protect the most vulnerable members of society, at least not directly. These projects were designed mainly for able-bodied working-age adults, and more often than not, only white, male, and skilled ones. Often, the movement anticipated many indirect and long-term benefits to others from its projects, but it also recognized that these projects imposed short-term costs on some of the most vulnerable people. For example, the exclusionary work and immigration practices it
favored deprived some of employment for the benefit of better-off workers. The idea that rights have a distinctive affinity with extreme vulnerability is entirely foreign to this perspective. The Progressives of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did focus on the protection of vulnerable groups such as the unemployed, women, children, the elderly, and mentally ill. As recent liberals complain insistently, however, the Progressives tended not to formulate their projects in terms of legal rights, as Legal Liberalism understands them, but rather in terms of paternalistic discretion.8

2. Populism

The second predisposition of Legal Liberalism is a deep distrust of large institutions, especially governments and big business corporations. This distrust generates extreme sensitivity to the corruptions of power and wealth. The stereotypes of the government official and the corporate executive portray the primary motivations of the former as power and lust, and that of the latter as greed.

"Today it is the combined power of government and the corporations that presses against the individual," Charles Reich wrote in the seminal academic contribution to Legal Liberalism.9 The closing arguments and after-dinner speeches of tort plaintiffs' lawyers routinely contrast the virtues and vulnerabilities of "the people" or "the little man" with the rapacities of corporations or the state.10 The philosopher David Luban, a leading theorist of legal ethics, asserts that "the real value underlying the advocate's role is the protection of individuals against institutions that pose chronic

10. In the words of one plaintiffs' lawyer,
[w]hen a warrior for the people demonstrates he can sometimes beat the king's favorites, the corporate giant, the money makers, that he can free the accused once safely in the clutches of the king—such a warrior stands for the proposition that the little men can win and little warriors for the people can survive in the courtroom....
threats to their well-being," a category in which he includes all government and big business institutions.\(^\text{11}\)

The political doctrine that emphasizes the pervasive corruption of institutions is Populism. Populism juxtaposes the corruption of institutions to the virtue of unorganized individuals, and portrays the role of political leaders as largely defensive and redistributive, focused on checking the excesses of organized elites in order to provide benefits for unorganized citizens.\(^\text{12}\) There is some analogy between the role of unorganized citizens and political leaders in the Populist political vision, and the role within Legal Liberalism for trial lawyers, perhaps judges, and above all, juries. Trial lawyers, judges, and juries have in common their relative independence from the constraints, and presumably corruptions, of large institutions. In particular, the jury, as a temporary assembly of ordinary individuals who are only minimally accountable to surrounding institutions, represents the Populist anti-institutional ideal incarnate.

3. The Priority of Rights

We also find in Legal Liberalism a commitment to formulating certain fundamental norms as rights, and to insisting on the priority of these norms over other values. Rights are analytical, individualistic, categorical, judicially enforceable, and corrective.

Rights are derived analytically by the application of legal reasoning to authoritative sources. Although they are ultimately grounded in social consensus, the derivation of specific conclusions in contested cases requires specialized methods and institutions. As courts and lawyers play a predominant role, the most important part of that role consists of a mode of reasoning that generates specific conclusions of entitlement.

Rights are individualistic; they protect autonomy. They have in general the quality that Reich ascribed specifically to property:


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Property draws a circle around the activities of each individual or organization. Within that circle the individual has a greater degree of freedom than without. Outside he must justify or explain his activities and show his authority. Within he is master, and the state must explain or justify any interference. There must be sanctuaries or enclaves where no majority can reach.¹³

There is no consensus within Legal Liberalism on the exact content of the category of rights, but the rights idea has an affinity with individual interests in privacy and physical autonomy, with claims against state interference with individual action, and with the protection of established entitlements.¹⁴

The idea of "enclaves where no majority can reach" also connotes the categorical quality of rights.¹⁵ Rights differ from other norms in being less susceptible to trade-offs and balancing. For some, rights are "trumps" that compel recognition and conclude discussion.¹⁶ For others, rights have a vaguer priority; they yield only to exception-ally weighty non-rights values. In any case, to designate something as a right is to imply that it has presumptive priority over some competing set of values.

Further, a right strongly implies, if it does not entail, judicial definition and enforcement. The remission of rights enforcement to even a relatively benign administrative structure, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs in its dealings with veterans, is deeply suspect. Even more so is their remission to private institutions: for example, through the easy enforcement of contractual arbitration clauses. The central judicial role implies an exemption from the general Populist suspicion of institutions for judges as well as juries. Legal Liberalism is rife with idealized portrayals of the judicial role and sentimental homages to particular judges. For example, the role of the judicial clerkship as a paternalistic

¹³. Reich, supra note 9, at 787.
¹⁴. In The New Property, Reich used several images suggesting the physical autonomy interpretation, such as the New York case that denied welfare benefits to a man who insisted, against the instructions of welfare officers, on sleeping in a barn in a pile of rags. Id. at 758. When he came to formulate his conception of right explicitly, however, he emphasized protection for vested economic benefits. Id. at 785-86.
¹⁵. Id. at 787.
initiation ritual for elite academics contributes to this tendency. In a less romantic vein, the judiciary is simply the "least dangerous branch"; the one whose institutional constraints limit its capacity for corruption and dispose it to rights enforcement.

Finally, rights with monetary remedies are typically grounded in corrective justice—the rectification of past wrongs at the expense of those deemed responsible for them. Legal Liberalism tends to presume that injurious wrongdoing ought to give rise to claims for redress against the wrongdoer. We see this in the attachment to the tort system as opposed to no-fault compensation systems. We see it as well in the position that currently disadvantaged people whose position is due to an injustice that they or their ancestors suffered under prior legal regimes receive "reparations" from surviving corporate and governmental institutions that bear responsibility.  

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There is a key exception to the Legal Liberal attitude toward rights: the labor law of collective bargaining. The labor law that came down from the New Deal is distinctive in the extent to which it restricts conventional individual rights in the interests of collective power. For example, it permits non-union members to be bound by union actions without their consent, and it deprives workers of individual enforcement rights with respect to many key interests, remitting them to rights within the union. The idea is that effective joint action requires a limitation of individual autonomy. For decades, liberals generally supported this regime as a half-acknowledged exception to their commitment to individual rights. The rights-based critiques of labor law tended to come from conservatives. The phrase "right to work," meaning the right to be hired without having to pay dues to a union, has definite reactionary connotations. The civil rights movement partially discredited the New Deal regime because of the unions' pervasive mistreatment of minority and women workers under that regime. It was easy to win liberal support for rights of minority and women workers to bring challenges to union discrimination directly to the courts. Outside of race and gender issues, however, full-scale liberal challenges to the collectivist premises of the New Deal regime were rare. Perhaps the clearest one did not appear until 1980. See Staughton Lynd, Government Without Rights: The Labor Law Vision of Archibald Cox, 4 INDUS. REL. L.J. 483 (1980).

Labor law and unions, however, have ceased to play the central role they once did in liberal thought. In law schools, this means that virtually the only course in which the individualist premises of the liberal commitment to rights are systematically put in question from the perspective of the left is one that most students, even most politically-engaged left-leaning students, do not take. (I say "virtually" because there is another exception—the law of Native American tribal relations—but that course has always been marginal.)
B. Operating Premises

1. Procedural Individuation and Differentiation

The first operating premise of Legal Liberalism is that disputed facts on which a claim of right depends be determined in a distinctive manner. This manner is the adjudicatory hearing. Ideally, such a hearing involves a personal appearance by the claimant, representation by a lawyer, oral evidence, cross-examination, and a legally-trained professional decision maker with substantial independence from both market and bureaucratic pressures.18

This relatively elaborate and expensive procedure is valuable in part as the most effective means of enforcing claims of right. Rights enforcement is important in itself, and because it has some deterrent effect that induces potential defendants to comply with legal requirements in their general course of conduct. The liberal commitment to adjudication, however, is founded on more than accurate decision making and deterrence. Adjudicatory participation has an intrinsic value. The opportunity to have one's day in court, or in a diluted administrative variation, is asserted to be an important satisfaction, even to those who are unsuccessful on the merits. Adjudication serves "dignitary" values and expresses respect for the claimant.

Adjudication in this view is an individual procedure. The dignity in question is that of an individual participating alone or through a representative committed only to her in a proceeding concerning a right peculiar to her. At least this is the paradigm. The forms of collective adjudication, including aggregate settlements, consolidated trials, and class actions, are innovations whose contours are substantially undefined and whose legitimacy is contested precisely because they depart from individual claim determination. To the extent that they permit conclusive determination of rights without opportunities for direct participation by claimants and without claimant control of lawyers, they generate a good deal of anxiety within Legal Liberalism.

A further feature of this perspective is that adjudication is strongly differentiated from administration. Dispute resolution processes have little resemblance to routine decision-making processes and are structurally separate from them. Adjudicatory processes are more elaborate and more individual, while routine decision making is summary and wholesale. Legal regulation focuses largely on the dispute processes, and is relatively uninterested in routine decision making until routine decisions become disputes.

The separation of administration and adjudication is reinforced by the adjudicatory ideal of the decision maker. The adjudicator is supposed to be someone not involved in the original decision and not subject to supervision by anyone who is involved. Ideally, he is to have substantial independence from those who enact the norms that he is applying, and he is to have the legal training to differentiate his background from those making administrative decisions. The paradigmatic adjudicatory institutions, the courts, thus enjoy unique organizational autonomy. Even in the broad range of administrative adjudications within public and private bureaucracies, however, the adjudicatory processes are typically strongly separated from the administrative ones.19

2. Rules and Standards

A pervasive dialectic of modern legal thought arises from the opposition of rules and standards.20 A rule is a norm that strictly limits the range of factors that the decision maker can consider and characteristically dictates a particular decision upon a finding of one or a few basic facts. A standard mandates that the decision maker vindicate a more general value by considering the full range of relevant facts in the context in which the dispute arises. “Do not drive over 65 miles per hour” is a rule, while “do not drive unsafely” is a standard. Rules have an over- and underinclusive quality. They sometimes require the decision maker to decide in a way that is inconsistent with the ultimate purposes of the rule. Standards have


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an indeterminate quality. Since they enlarge the range of relevance, they tend to make for more expensive enforcement procedures and create controversy about how they should be applied, even to undisputed facts.

The dialectic of rules and standards is not unique to Legal Liberalism, but it has an especially strong resonance there. On the one hand, there is both a moral and a social cost to the under- and overinclusiveness of rules. Underinclusiveness means that there is no sanction for socially obnoxious conduct or no assistance for a socially recognized need that does not come within the terms of the rule. Overinclusiveness means that we penalize otherwise acceptable or desirable conduct or reward undeserving conduct just because it does come within the terms of the rule. Such results potentially involve a sacrifice of social welfare, justice, and solidarity. This intuition led the Warren Court to flirt with the "irrebutable presumption" doctrine. In *United States Department of Agriculture v. Murry*, the Court rejected a Food Stamp rule that denied eligibility to a household when any member had been declared as a dependent on the tax return of a non-member.\(^1\) The Court viewed the rule as presuming irrebutably and unreasonably, first, that the taxpayer was supporting the putative dependent and, second, that he was supporting the remaining household members.\(^2\) It then went on to suggest that the Constitution might invalidate any such regulatory overbreadth to the extent that it deprived a poor person of a basic need.\(^3\) Upon reflection, the Court backed off.\(^4\) The consequences of such a doctrine would have been too drastic. The legal system depends pervasively on rules. It requires them in order to reduce decision-making costs and to restrain individual discretion to make complex judgments.

The response to this dilemma in Legal Liberalism consists of three tendencies. First, there is a preference for standards for decision makers who are presumed trustworthy and a preference for rules for those who are presumed untrustworthy. The most salient trusted class is the judiciary. In general, Legal Liberalism has

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\(^1\) 413 U.S. 508 (1978).
\(^2\) *Id.* at 512-13.
\(^3\) *Id.* at 513-14 (citing Stanley v. Illinois, 405 U.S. 645, 656 (1972)).
favored broad contextual decision-making power for judges under
norms like due process, reasonableness, public convenience and
necessity, and just cause. The most salient distrusted class is the
police. Thus, we have the *Miranda* rule.

Second, rules are acceptable, and even desirable, when the costs
of under- or overinclusion are borne by nondisadvantaged people.
The costs of the exclusionary rule in criminal cases are borne by the
prosecution, rather than the class of criminal defendants favored by
Legal Liberalism. The costs of strict liability in tort, a rule-like
norm, are borne by defendant corporations, rather than the favored
class of plaintiffs. A rule-like welfare system of child allowances
or a negative income tax is preferred to a standards-like means-
tested system on the assumption that the State bears the costs of
overinclusion of the former.

Third, where the law gives institutions power over ordinary
people, standards should exist to allow the latter to raise the full
range of pertinent social values that weigh against the adverse
exercise of such power in the circumstances of the particular case.
This means broad defenses of fraud, duress, mistake, and
unconscionability in contract. It means just cause standards for job
dismissal and eviction. It means tort recovery for pain and suffering
and emotional distress, as well as material loss.

### 3. Confidentiality and Bilateral Information Control

Liberal legal practice is characterized by strong confidentiality
safeguards and an emphasis on the role of lawyers in the strategic
control of information. The most salient norms here are the strong
attorney-client evidentiary privilege, the ethical duty of confidentiality,
and rules of civil procedure that require the disclosure of
disadvantageous material information only when the opposing
party is able to formulate a demand for it. The bar’s confidentiality
rule is an extreme one that requires the lawyer to withhold
information in a broad range of situations where disclosure might
remedy substantial injustice. The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure
deny important information merely because the opposing party is

25. See generally Duncan Kennedy, *Distributive and Paternalist Notions in Tort and
Contract Law with Special References to Compulsory Terms and Unequal Bargaining Power*,
unable to formulate an adequate demand for it, most likely because that party lacks sufficient awareness of the nature of the information.\textsuperscript{26}

More broadly, this approach gives the lawyer the role, once the possibility of dispute arises, of gatekeeper between the client and the outside world. At least presumptively, the client is supposed to cease direct or unilateral communications with outsiders. In discovery and often in regulatory compliance, the lawyer takes charge of disclosure functions. The attorney-client privilege encourages firms to put lawyers in charge of investigations of possibly illegal conduct in order to minimize the possibility of involuntary disclosure of the findings. Lawyers accompany parties and even nonparty witnesses to depositions and tell them that they must not volunteer information. Lawyers instruct and rehearse clients extensively for trial. Once the very prospect of litigation arises, the client is instructed not to communicate about the matter even in contexts unrelated to the litigation. Injury victims, prospective tort and criminal defendants, and even witnesses routinely tell journalists that their lawyers have told them not to talk about the case, and this is usually accepted as a satisfactory explanation for their silence.

We have grown accustomed to the sight of witnesses at congressional hearings, even those who have little prospect of being joined in related litigation, appearing with and intermittently consulting lawyers. No one thought it at all remarkable, for example, that Anita Hill, herself a lawyer, appeared for her testimony in the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearing with a battery of lawyers, even though there was little prospect of ensuing litigation and her role, in theory, was just to give a straightforward lay account of events she had observed.

The gatekeeper function is supposed to play a role in protecting various privacy rights of the client. The most important of these is the privilege against self-incrimination. This rationale, however, has limited relevance. In many situations, there are no relevant privacy rights, aside from those that attach to the attorney-client

\textsuperscript{26} \textsc{Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(a)} (establishing the discovery rule requiring production without request only for a narrow range of information); \textit{Model Rules of Prof'L Conduct} R. 1.6 (2003) (prescribing the confidentiality duty); \textit{John Henry Wigmore, Evidence} §§ 2290-2292 (Chadbourne rev. ed., 1981) (discussing the evidentiary privilege).
relation itself. In these situations, the lawyer's information control function is explained as serving social interests in accurate disclosure. We get more disclosure because clients who are assured of their lawyers' loyalty make more disclosure to their lawyers, and lawyers persuade and assist clients to pass on the information to the extent required by law. Moreover, we get more concise and accurate disclosure to the extent that the lawyer is able to shape it to remove redundancy and ambiguity.

The idea of lawyer control of information is related to a litigation procedure dominated by a trial format that is characterized by orality, continuity, and concentration. Unlike procedure in civil law countries, the paradigmatic Anglo-American trial is a single, continuous event, rather than a series of discrete evidentiary proceedings. It typically takes place in a short period of time, nearly always occupies only a small fraction of the course of the entire litigation, and emphasizes oral testimony by witnesses present in court.

Of course, a trial is a rare thing in American litigation, as most cases are settled. Trials, however, remain the default procedure in the absence of settlement, and the prospect of trial is an overwhelming influence on settlement. Legal Liberalism celebrates this kind of trial as a powerful safeguard of justice.

The Anglo-American trial reinforces the role of the lawyer as gatekeeper. Proceedings of this sort put a high premium on extensive preparation and precise execution, as a litigant has a single, intensely focused opportunity to make her case. Mistakes or bad impressions are relatively hard to correct. The trier has a limited opportunity to absorb the case, therefore, clarity and coherence of presentation are critical. The tradition of the adversary system mandates relative passivity on the part of the judge and constrains her ability to assist the litigants directly in presenting their cases. Under these circumstances, the dominance of professional advocates is inevitable.

Moreover, this procedure encourages lawyer control prior to the trial. The compression of the trial means that a single piece of evidence can have a large impact. Nuance is often lost, and

27. MODEL RULES OF PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.6 cmt. 2 (2003).
sophisticated explanations are not always possible. The Anglo-American trial is in some respects a battle of sound bites. The procedure thus creates the risk that a prior statement, when offered in evidence, out-of-context and shorn of nuance, will create a misleadingly adverse impression at trial that was not anticipated at the time it was made. The impression may be hard to correct and may require the expenditure of scarce time and effort to do so. This kind of risk justifies the lawyer in advising the client to forego independent communication about the circumstances at issue.

Notice that partisan control at trial and partisan witness preparation reinforce each other. Partisan witness preparation leads to distrust of witnesses, which leads to giving opposing counsel great latitude in cross-examination. Anticipation of the distorting effects of hostile cross-examination, however, intensifies the need for witness preparation.

II. A LIBERAL CRITIQUE OF LEGAL LIBERALISM

Legal Liberalism remains the dominant perspective of a broad segment of the bar, but there is less confidence and more unease about it than there once was, as evidenced by the now familiar critiques. One critique objects that a program focusing on rights without devoting proportionate attention to corresponding duties undermines the moral and institutional basis for productive social cooperation. In other words, rights consciousness diverts attention from the kinds of altruistic effort and self-restraint that society has a right to expect from even its disadvantaged members. Although this point may seem smug when voiced from a position of upper-class privilege, it has been voiced increasingly in recent years from among the disadvantaged themselves. If criminal defendants tend to be disadvantaged, so do the victims of crime, we are reminded. Some leaders of poor communities have expressed sympathy for the idea that an emphasis on rights to welfare, for example, may impede development of the initiative and self-discipline needed to attain economic self-sufficiency.

Another critique asserts that the recognition and even enforcement of legal rights for the disadvantaged is unlikely to significantly improve their well-being in the absence of reforms fundamentally altering the distribution of wealth and power. Such an upheaval is not part of the Legal Liberal agenda, and its tools of rights creation and enforcement would be inadequate to it. In the absence of fundamental redistributive change, however, economic and political inequality will swamp the effects of liberal rights expansion. Sellers of goods or services will respond to consumer protection doctrines by raising their prices or ceasing to deal with poor consumers. Employers will respond to restraints on arbitrary or discriminatory discharges by hiring less. Middle-class whites will respond to desegregation decrees by moving to the suburbs. Government agencies will respond to conditions on their administration of programs by shutting the programs down or by shifting resources from areas where they have discretion in order to comply with judicial commands in other areas.\(^{31}\)

There have been strong replies to these critiques from within Legal Liberalism,\(^ {32}\) but both remain important and, on some points, powerful. At present, I want to consider some criticisms more grounded in the basic commitments of political liberalism. These criticisms do not assert the futility of redistributive reform. Even though they invoke notions of duty and responsibility, they do not do so in the name of hierarchy or conformity, but rather in the interest of effective democratic collective action on the part of the disadvantaged.

31. There are conservative and radical versions of this critique, depending on whether fundamental change is viewed as bad or good. See, e.g., DONALD HOROWITZ, THE COURTS AND SOCIAL POLICY (1977) (articulating the conservative version); Karl Marx, Critique of the Gotha Program, in THE MARX-ENGELS READER 525-41 (Robert C. Tucker ed., 2d ed. 1978) (presenting the radical version). A critique more characteristic of recent radical writing argues that liberal legal thought reinforces a culture of alienation that demobilizes and disorients the disadvantaged. See, e.g., Peter Gabel & Jay Feinman, Contract Law as Ideology, in THE POLITICS OF LAW: A PROGRESSIVE CRITIQUE 497-510 (David Kairys ed., 3rd ed. 1998). The Legal Pragmatist critique is closer to this one, but focuses on institutional structures at least as much as rhetoric and consciousness.

32. For a response to the virtue critique, see Gerald P. Lopez, A Declaration of War by Other Means, 98 HARV. L. REV. 1667 (1985) (reviewing MORGAN, supra note 29). For a response to one application of the ineffectuality critique, see Duncan Kennedy, The Effect of the Warranty of Habitability on Low Income Housing: “Milking” and Class Violence, 15 FLA. ST. U. L. REV. 485 (1987). The Legal Pragmatist studies cited supra note 4 are full of counterexamples to the ineffectuality critique.
A. The Anti-Policy Bias of Rights Talk

As conventionally used, right does not connote simply any important value. It works rhetorically to privilege a subset of values and to bias consideration of competing ones. In particular, this bias works against collective as opposed to individual values, against values that require public support as opposed to noninterference, against new as opposed to established benefits, and against the consideration of consequences other than immediate benefit to the claimant. Accordingly, it is harder to make a rights claim for a neighborhood's opportunity to control land development within its borders than against a taking of an individual's property without compensation. It is harder to make a rights claim for police protection from private harassment than for freedom from police harassment. It is harder to make a rights claim for the provision of unenacted welfare benefits than against rescission of enacted Social Security benefits. To be sure, there is a tendency to try to expand rights claims to embrace any interest deemed important by political liberalism, but this course would dilute the rights idea to triviality. The central rhetorical thrust of the rights theme has always been to suggest that there is a subcategory of important interests that merit a special type of commitment from the legal system.

In operation, however, rights rhetoric does not seem to mark out a set of claims that could plausibly be regarded as more central to the basic liberal commitments of liberty and equality than the claims against which this rhetoric is invoked. To be sure, the rhetoric resonates with the long tradition of constitutionalist political theory that holds that certain protections of individual flourishing must be safeguarded against legislative majorities. To some extent, rights talk implicates the debate within political liberalism between constitutionalism and legislative supremacy. But often this rhetoric is deployed in a stale, dogmatic manner that

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34. E.g., Lynd, supra note 17, at 494-95 (arguing in response to the claim that the rights idea has been inimical to worker interests in collective organizational efficacy that such interests should also be deemed rights).

reflects little more than a desire to protect longstanding visceral attachments against reexamination.

A series of intellectual rigidities that commonly accompany the rights theme magnify this impression. These include: a formalist tendency to assume that legal texts have timeless and essential meanings that can be derived without reference to their contexts; a "slippery slope" tendency to assume that the smallest reduction of an entitlement will cascade into an enormous loss; a Utopian tendency to ignore the costs of the recognition of entitlements; a paranoid tendency to portray competing values in terms of the interests of government and corporate power and wealth; a sentimental tendency to defend general rules with broad social consequences in terms of dramatic, emotionally compelling, but not necessarily typical, stories of individual misfortune; and a self-righteous tendency to see serious injuries as consequences of morally blameworthy misconduct. Of course, these tendencies are not unique to Legal Liberalism. The claim here is simply that, within Legal Liberalism, they are strongly associated with the rights theme. The only way to support this claim is through examples.

1. Community Policing

In an article called When Rights are Wrong, Tracey Meares and Dan Kahan criticized the Warren Court's criminal procedure doctrine for impeding efforts by minority communities to organize in order to enhance neighborhood security.\(^3\) In particular, they focused on the "void-for-vagueness" doctrine used to strike down loitering ordinances and the search-and-seizure doctrine.\(^7\) The American Civil Liberties Union and others used these doctrines against a series of measures adopted in some of Chicago's crime-troubled minority neighborhoods. Those measures included the mass building search for weapons or drugs in housing projects and a loitering ordinance that gave police discretion to order people suspected of gang-related activity to disperse.


\(^{37}\) See Meares & Kahan, supra note 2, at 8.
Against the ACLU interpretation of the Warren Court precedents that such measures should be categorically invalid, Meares and Kahan argued that their validity should be assessed contextually in terms of three factors. The first factor is the extent of support for the measures in the local communities affected by them. Measures imposed by a remote and unrepresentative government ought to be suspect, but measures supported by local institutions deserve deference. The second factor, "burden sharing," looks at whether the costs of the measure unfairly accrue to some recognizable group within the community other than groups defined primarily in terms of a propensity for illegal activity. If the burdens were fairly distributed, then that should weigh in favor of acceptance. The third factor, "guided discretion," evaluates the extent to which the measures are accompanied by processes that structure the discretion they confer and induce accountability for its exercise. In connection with the Chicago loitering ordinances, Meares and Kahan pointed out that the police department permitted its enforcement only by designated officers working under specific guidelines and that enforcement was part of a community policing strategy in which police worked closely with neighborhood groups.

As they surely anticipated, the responses to Meares and Kahan's argument from card-carrying liberals were largely, and sometimes passionately, negative. Some of the responses challenged the suggestion that their criteria were satisfied in the Chicago case. In particular, they questioned whether there was broad and informed support in the affected minority communities for the measures and whether the police were exercising their discretion in a structured, accountable fashion. Several respondents also challenged the criteria themselves and insisted that the measures in question should be invalid regardless of whether the three conditions were satisfied.

For example, Albert Alschuler and Stephen Schulhofer argued that the idea of an affected community was so indeterminate that it could not be properly defined for the purpose of measuring approval (a skepticism that would seem to preclude democratic legitimacy for any legislative act) and that "[o]ur Constitution does

38. See id. at 25-26.
39. See id. at 27-29.
40. See id. at 16.
not permit a majority to limit individual rights simply by offering to share the burden."\(^4\) The "Framers," they concluded, "enacted a Constitution that guaranteed rights, not to collectivities, but to individuals."\(^4\)

Alschuler and Schulhofer at least implied that a unanimous waiver might be acceptable, although given their skepticism about legislative boundaries, it would have to be a global one. Carol Steiker would not go even this far. For her, the rights established by these forty-year-old Warren Court cases are timeless and inalienable. She framed the issue as a contest between "indispensable freedoms" (not to be subject to police discretion) and "expedient policy," (the interest in not being victimized by violent crime) and insisted that the former must "trump" the latter.\(^4\)

The themes of these critiques—extreme skepticism about democracy and all forms of nonjudicial collective action, the selective invocation of tradition, and the conclusory privileging of interests conventionally defined as individual—are echoed in Alan Dershowitz's contribution.\(^4\) Dershowitz takes particular exception to Meares' and Kahan's effort to promote the interest in neighborhood security to the level of a right by the term "group rights," dismissing the term as an "oxymoron," and noting ominously that "[g]roups ... have interests and agendas....\(^4\) "Our traditional conception of rights," he further insisted, "is directed against governmental abuses."\(^4\) Interests that do not fit within this conception have to yield because of a "fundamental lesson of history: that in the long run, abuses by the state are far more dangerous to liberty and democracy than individual criminal conduct....\(^4\)

\(^{41}\) Albert W. Alschuler & Stephen J. Schulhofer, Antiquated Procedures or Bedrock Rights?: A Response to Professors Meares and Kahan, 1998 U. CHI. LEGAL F. 215, 240 (ignoring Meares and Kahan's point that the likelihood of disproportionate burden should determine whether there is a constitutional right).

\(^{42}\) Id. at 244 (failing to note that the Framers would almost certainly have considered anti-loitering laws legitimate). See Lawrence M. Friedman, Crime and Punishment in American History, 103-04 (1993) (indicating that harsh treatment of vagrancy was an accepted part of the Anglo-American legal tradition until recently).

\(^{43}\) Carol S. Steiker, More Wrong Than Rights, in URGENT TIMES, supra note 2, at 49, 55-57.

\(^{44}\) Alan M. Dershowitz, Rights and Interests, in URGENT TIMES, supra note 2, at 33.

\(^{45}\) Id. at 35.

\(^{46}\) Id. at 36.

\(^{47}\) Id.
Presumably this "fundamental lesson" does not mean we should have no state enforcement of the criminal law, but Dershowitz never explained why it dictates a scope that excludes the Chicago measures. Meares and Kahan had not ignored the dangers of state abuse, but rather proposed different checks on them, such as community and departmental monitoring. Apparently for Dershowitz, history speaks only through the Warren Court.

Alschuler and Shulhofer, Steiker, and Dershowitz all invoke the slippery slope argument to suggest that, even if these Chicago communities had somehow plausibly and legitimately concluded that it was in their interests to adopt the measures, they should not be able to do so because their actions would have negative precedential effects. The premise seems to be that other communities would be unable to discern the particular features that distinguished Chicago's situation from their own and thus be tempted to import the Chicago innovations to inappropriate environments. The critics do not explain why they think this difficulty with contextual thinking is so widespread. The suspicion arises that they are simply projecting the pathologies of their own rhetorical practices on the population at large.

2. Tort Reform

The American tort system has radical deficiencies that one would expect liberals to decry. The system provides no benefits at all to most injured people because, for example, they were injured without fault or without discovering the fault, their damages are too low to warrant the cost of bringing a claim, or the injurer is judgment-proof. The awards the system does make are staggeringly arbitrary, depending on the actual or anticipated judgments in thousands of dispersed venues of panels of lay decision makers assembled for a single case, operating under vague instructions, and without any knowledge of decisions in other cases. (These are exactly the conditions that liberal lawyers often mention as making fair

decision making about the death penalty impossible.) The system's effect in deterring bad conduct seems weak, and in some respects, perverse. Most importantly, the compensation that the system does provide is accomplished only at a huge expense. Less than fifty percent of the total payments by defendants go to claimants, and in some categories, much less. For example, one series of studies found that, "close to two-thirds of insurance company expenditures in asbestos suits (including cases settled before trial) ended up in the pockets of lawyers and experts for both sides rather than in those of asbestos victims and their families."49

One might expect liberals to favor the replacement of this system with one that is more inclusive, involves stronger administrative and less partisan control, and restricts or eliminates juries, such as that proposed by Stephen Sugarman or the one actually operating in New Zealand.50 To some extent, they do, but many liberal lawyers seem to have a soft spot for the tort system. Their indulgence seems related to the fact that comprehensive reform challenges the basic commitments of Legal Liberalism to procedural individuation and partisan control, its populist suspicion of nonjudicial state actors, and a tendency to regard the benefits that the current system provides as rights.

Surely these premises play some role in the virtual disappearance of comprehensive tort reform from liberal legal discussion and political practice in recent years. Instead, both debate and practice have focused around a small set of incremental reforms, most proposed by conservatives or businesses, such as caps on non-economic damages or limits on attorneys' fees. Such ideas address important problems in the system, but most are poorly designed, and there are ample grounds for opposing them.51 Much of the liberal lawyers' discussion of these reforms, however, is striking for its absence of serious analysis or meaningful alternatives. Much of it, including virtually all the statements of Ralph Nader and the trial lawyers' associations, expresses a vehement categorical...

49. KAGAN, supra note 48, at 127; see also Lester Brickman, The Asbestos Litigation Crisis: Is There a Need for an Administrative Alternative?, 13 CARDozo L. REV. 1819, 1834-37, 1855 n.61 (1992) (calculating that attorneys' fees on a large set of asbestos claims that did not involve substantial risk or call for exceptional skill averaged $5,000 an hour).

50. See generally SUGARMAN, supra note 48.

51. For discussion and references, see MARC A. FRANKLIN & ROBERT L. RABIN, TORT LAW AND ALTERNATIVES 690-97, 787-92 (7th ed. 2001).
opposition to any serious alteration of the system. Rhetorically, this rigidity is strongly associated with rights talk.

Currently, doctors in several states maintain there is a malpractice crisis. At least one insurance company has gone under, and several have cancelled coverage of especially risky practice areas, such as obstetrics. Rates have soared to the point that some doctors are abandoning their practices. Even before the crisis, malpractice insurance rates in the United States were said to be several times the comparable rates in Canada. The doctors are asking state legislatures to intervene. Asked for his views on this situation, the president of the West Virginia Trial Lawyers Association said, "(t)he real crisis that we face is the threat to our system of justice. They want to take away our fundamental right to seek and obtain compensation for a wrong."

The idea that the payoffs flowing from the lottery that our tort system has become represent fundamental rights has been taken to heart by several state supreme courts, which have struck down various attempts at reform. The Supreme Court of Florida, for example, interpreted a provision of the state constitution providing no more than that "(t)he courts shall be open to every person for redress of any injury" to effectively constitutionalize established tort law. It followed that a $450,000 cap on pain-and-suffering damages was invalid regardless of the policy justifications for it: "We are dealing with a constitutional right which may not be restricted simply because the legislature deems it rational to do so." Courts in at least eighteen states have held a variety of tort reforms to deny several constitutional rights, including rights to due process, equal protection, and jury trials. The decisions have

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54. Smith v. Dep’t of Ins., 507 So.2d 1080, 1087 (Fla. 1987).
55. Id. at 1087-92.
56. Id. at 1089.
57. See Richard C. Turkington, Constitutional Limitations on Tort Reform: Have the State Courts Placed Insurmountable Obstacles in the Path of Legislative Responses to the Perceived
in common that they are based on formalistic deductions from vague constitutional language, they more or less explicitly refuse to consider policy arguments, and they afford a level of protection to tort plaintiffs' rights that is considerably greater than the same courts typically give to other private law interests.

Dogmatic conceptions of right played an important role in the 1998 defeat of a congressional response to health claims against the tobacco companies that would have replaced expensive lawyer-dominated litigation with administrative tribunals and streamlined eligibility criteria and procedures. The proposed settlement also would have strengthened federal regulation over cigarettes and, at once, increased resources and redirected them away from individual claim payment toward public health measures. After elaborate negotiations, coalitions of self-interested trial lawyers and sincere activists under the influence of Legal Liberalism defeated the proposal. In a detailed account of the negotiations, Michael Pertschuk concluded that the opposition was mistaken and reported that some of the opponents, including Ralph Nader, were having second thoughts. No doubt the merits of the settlement were debatable, but it is troubling that so much of the argument against it took the form of unreflective rights rhetoric. Opponents denounced the bill's modest limitation of damage liability as a violation of individual rights, even though no one could say reliably what the magnitude of civil liability under existing law was or which claimants could expect to benefit. They insisted on the

Liability Insurance Crisis?, 32 VILL. L. REV. 1299, 1317-22 (1987). To be sure, many decisions have rejected such challenges. Id. at 1303-04.


59. See id. at 274-79. To date, a similar coalition has thwarted analogous reforms regarding asbestos. See Lester Brickman, Lawyers' Ethics and Fiduciary Obligation in the Brave New World of Aggregative Litigation, 26 WM. & MARY ENVTL. L. & POLY REV. 243, 246 n.13 (2001).

60. See PERTSCHUK, supra note 58, at 132-33, 217-19. There had been no significant recoveries in private tobacco cases up to this point, and as the experience with asbestos cases suggests, smoker interests are poor candidates for elevation as rights even by Legal Liberal standards. Recovery requires doctrinal innovation on such matters as causation and assumption of the risk which no one could have anticipated at the time of the defendants' conduct. It requires factual findings regarding such matters as the plaintiff's exposure to asbestos or awareness of tobacco toxicity that are not susceptible to reliable determination in circumstances where the only evidence is often oral testimony that is likely to be distorted by self-interest. It also necessitates modifications of traditional court procedure to facilitate
importance of punishing the companies with massive liability—though there was little reason to believe such liability would have any effect on the individual wrongdoers, who were likely to have retired or sold their stock—or on the practices of the companies, which would continue to operate after bankruptcy by peddling their wares for the benefit of the plaintiffs.61

Rights rhetoric on tort reform is strongly reinforced by Populist themes. There is considerable public sympathy for injured people, and the typical voter is more likely to find herself in the position of a tort plaintiff than of a tort defendant. In simple majoritarian terms, one would expect legislatures to fairly protect plaintiffs’ interests. It is thus an important part of the case against judicial deference to legislatures that they have been captured by corporate interests. Ralph Nader, in a book with Wesley Smith, calls tort reform “the corporate scheme to wreck our justice system.”62 After dismissing reform proposals as “a direct assault on victims” and “anti-individual rights,” Nader and Smith describe at length the corporate contributors to various lobbying groups and conclude, “[b]ehind the various front groups agitating for tort reform in Washington and state capitals are the usual suspects: America’s richest industrial and insurance companies and their power-lawyer lieutenants from [the] big firms....”63 Nader and Smith do have some policy arguments against the reforms, but their main point seems to be that the reforms are discredited simply by virtue of their association with the presumptively greedy striving of big business.

Nader and Smith take no account that one of the major lobbying and advocacy forces on these issues is the plaintiffs’ bar. One would never know from them that the vanguard of this bar has emerged in recent decades as a wealthy and highly organized political power. Nader and Smith include an appendix listing “[t]he Top-Grossing Law Firms in the United States” and their annual gross revenues,64 apparently intending to awe and disturb us with the large numbers, but do not mention that most of the highest-paid individual lawyers

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61. PERTSCHUK, supra note 58, at 134-35.
62. See NADER & SMITH, supra note 52, at 256.
63. Id. at 259.
64. Id. at 371-76.
in the United States are tort plaintiffs' lawyers.\textsuperscript{65} The contributions of the trial lawyers to President Clinton's first electoral campaign were among the largest of any industry group. When Clinton vetoed two liability reform bills in his first term, the vetoes were widely attributed to their influence.\textsuperscript{66}

B. The Inhibition of Civic Organization

The priority of rights and the commitments to confidentiality and procedural individuation suggest a view of law as the vindication of a series of discrete individual entitlements. This view does not rule out lawyering in connection with civic organization, but it sometimes turns out to be in significant tension with it.

1. Social Policy Design

The rights idea has a bias in favor of certain styles of social policy that may impede civic organization. Rights can impede organization by providing a substitute for it. The decline of American unions has been accompanied by the growth of a panoply of worker protections in the form of individual rights (for example, unlawful discharge constraints, anti-discrimination, ERISA, and health care regulation). There is no necessary causal relationship between individual rights and union decline, but there is a potential one. When society channels benefits through unions, it raises individual incentives to join and thus helps unions overcome the free rider problem that leads many not to join even though they benefit from the union's activity. For this reason, some nations provide a role for unions in the administration of social insurance or training benefits. Giving unions responsibilities for general benefit programs generates economies of scope with other activities and brings them into routine contact with workers. Conversely, a state that makes many benefits available as individual rights may inhibit the union's

\textsuperscript{65} The fifteen top earners in Forbes's survey of the highest-paid lawyers in 1994 (the year for which Nader and Smith reported firm incomes) were all plaintiffs' lawyers. On average, the highest-paid plaintiff's lawyers earned several times as much as the highest-paid corporate lawyers. Brigid McMenamin, \textit{The Best-Paid Lawyers}, \textit{FORBES}, Nov. 6, 1995, at 145-68.

organizing abilities. If the workers still need the union for some purposes but find it more difficult to organize, they could be worse off. Effective union action, moreover, may depend upon the union's ability to compel dissidents to comply with majority decisions and police free riding by people who get the benefits of collective action but are disinclined to contribute to them. Strong individual rights, such as the ability to refuse to abide by strike decisions or to contribute to union political activity, can impair collective efficacy. American housing and welfare policy displays a recurring competition between mobility policies, such as vouchers that create portable benefits that the individual recipient can take with her, and policies that provide benefits to community-based organizations to make improvements rooted in particular communities. One of the arguments for the latter is that they are more likely to induce civic participation that creates social capital and provides a variety of collective benefits. I cannot say that liberal lawyers have been hostile to the second approach, but their ideological premises make it difficult for them to explain its potential virtues.

2. Professional Responsibility and Legal Aid

If the idea of right implies a discrete entitlement that an individual holds "against the world," the corresponding idea of the lawyer-client relation is a "community of two" in which a professional champion protects the client from outsiders. This image, as

67. Tamara Lothian calls the model in which the state delegates to unions the performance of various social welfare and education functions "corporatist" and argues that, in comparison with the American alternative, it makes organizing much easier. Tamara Lothian, The Political Consequences of Labor Law Regimes: The Contractualist and Corporatist Models Compared, 7 CARDozo L. REV. 1001, 1008-11, 1017-27 (1986). For an exploration of the idea that organizational efficacy often requires collective coercion in order to overcome "free rider" problems, see MANCUR OLSON, THE LOGIC OF COLLECTIVE ACTION: PUBLIC GOODS AND THE THEORY OF GROUPS 66-98 (1965).


70. PHILIP RIEFF, THE TRIUMPH OF THE THERAPEUTIC: USES OF FAITH AFTER FREUD 52 (1966). This is Rieff's term for the patient-psychotherapist relation. I show that a similar conception of the lawyer-client relation pervades the law school clinical movement in William H. Simon, Homo Psychologicus: Notes on a New Legal Formalism, 32 STAN. L. REV. 487, 496-
expressed in the professional responsibility norms derived from
the premises of confidentiality and procedural individuation,
sometimes creates tensions with efforts to connect lawyering with
civic organization. The tensions are reinforced when this lawyering
image is combined with the Victim Perspective. We can see this in
the recurring anxiety about organizing and organizations in the
movement to provide civil legal aid to the poor.

Lawyers’ primary professional commitments are to clients. They
may not make commitments to principles or collectivities that
conflict with the interests of clients, other than the positive law and
certain basic procedural norms. They may not take on clients when
their own commitments are likely to limit their pursuit of the
client’s interests. They may not put themselves in positions where
third parties can influence their actions on behalf of clients.

The degree of constraint these principles impose depends on
how they are interpreted. There was a time when they were
interpreted to preclude lawyer participation in most efforts to
combine organizing with individual claim assertion. Traditionally,
in situations where lawyers acquired overlapping responsibilities
to both individual clients and organizations, the bar was quick to
find ethics violations on the basis of speculative conflicts of interest.
The two most important examples are the NAACP’s
antidiscrimination campaign and the railroad unions’ efforts to
assist trainmen in asserting workers’ compensation claims. Lawyers
who took individual cases referred to them by the NAACP and the
unions as part of these organizations’ broader political strategies
were disciplined on the ground that they had put themselves in a
position that might require them to sacrifice client interests to
those of the organizations. In neither case was there any evidence
that the lawyers did not serve the clients well, and in both cases the
clients’ adversaries prompted the campaigns against the lawyers.
In both cases, the campaigns to stop lawyers from cooperating with
these organizations were halted only by Supreme Court cases
holding that the activities were protected by the First Amend-
ment.

501 (1980).
Today the bar's efforts in these episodes are considered transparently reactionary. Legal Liberalism does not identify with them, but the anxiety they reflect about the conflict between client and organizational commitments still has an influence. The idea of the lawyer-client relation as a fortress for a single desperate individual seems to have played an important role in the reluctance of legal aid programs to organize small-case, neighborhood practices strategically. Gary Bellow, among others, argued for decades that this is exactly what they should pursue. Legal aid resources are sufficient to serve only a small fraction of the claims that might be asserted on behalf of the poor. In addition, many of the legal problems that these individual cases present have a systemic quality and involve practices of large institutions that affect broad numbers of people. It thus makes sense for legal services programs to set priorities and focus their efforts on these systemic problems. Bellow also suggested that aggregating and coordinating individual cases might be superior to appellate litigation for addressing many systemic problems. Appellate litigation is slow, and appellate rulings often have limited impact because there are insufficient resources to enforce them. On the other hand, individual case work can take place at the grassroots level and may be more amenable to coordination with other forms of civic activism.

Some legal services offices take a strategic approach to service work, but more resist it. They tend to set very broad parameters and then take whatever cases people happen to bring to the office. Some of the pressure to practice this way comes from conservatives with influence in Washington, who are suspicious of any federally subsidized lawyering that looks political. Few legal services lawyers are themselves conservatives, however, and they have their own reasons for inclining toward a nonstrategic style of service practice. Under any model, they will turn some people away, albeit uncomfortably. Under a focused, strategic model, however, they will turn
away more people and sooner. Moreover, they are uncomfortable setting priorities. Emotionally, they see their cases as discrete representations of individual people. Cognitively, they think of the job as the enforcement of individual rights.

Making an organization a client can mitigate these inhibitions. Under the bar's norms, an organizational client is treated more or less like an individual, and if the organization is committed to principles that the lawyer regards as valid, the potential for tension between collective commitments and client loyalty is minimized. There are, however, at least two limitations to this approach.

First, some legal aid lawyers put such a strong value on representing individuals that they are reluctant to accept any organizational representation that might put them in opposition to a poor person. For example, lawyers in a legal services program with which I am familiar once opposed representing a community nonprofit developing subsidized housing because representing the corporation might preclude them, under conflict-of-interest norms, from representing tenants in the housing after it was built, for example, if the corporation sought to evict the tenants. The corporation was a highly-regarded community-based organization. No one knew any reason to think it would mistreat its tenants, but these lawyers would have rather foregone the opportunity to represent an admired organization than lose the speculative possibility of representing individuals against it.

Second, disadvantaged groups are less formally organized than others. This means that if the legal aid lawyer wants to represent organizations, she will sometimes have to help form them. Efforts to help people organize will involve the lawyer in jointly representing individuals. Although such representation is common, the bar's norms express discomfort with it. They mandate a hypersensitivity to conflict that can sometimes inhibit or preclude particular efforts to assist groups that are not formally organized.

The norms on joint representation caution against the danger that jointly represented individuals will disclose confidences to each other and later regret it, or that one of the individuals may end up getting less in a joint representation than if she were represented individually. Under the previously dominant rules, a lawyer could not undertake a joint representation unless it was "obvious" that the representation would work out well for everyone, a standard
that, if taken literally, would almost never be satisfied. Even under the newer, more liberal standard, it is not enough that the representation appears to be the best course for everyone. If there is serious uncertainty, doubts are to be resolved against joint representation.

If disputes develop, the lawyer may have to cease representation of any of the individuals. More than likely, she will not be able to remain with the majority, or with those whose positions she believes are most consistent with the original project. The concern is that she will have confidences from each of them that she should not be able to use to any of the individuals' disadvantage. Even without confidences, the doctrine sometimes suggests that a sense of continuing loyalty to each individual precludes continued representation adverse to a former jointly represented client.

To some extent, this solicitude for the individual client is not waivable, at least prospectively. Suppose ten tenants ask a lawyer to bring a lawsuit against their landlord for failure to maintain the premises. They think that by conducting their cases in concert, they will achieve both cost efficiencies and greater leverage against the landlord. They also think that the landlord will not be willing to settle with any of them unless he can settle all the cases. They thus agree that they will abide by majority rule with respect to strategy and settlement. If one of them defects from the agreement, may the lawyer enforce the agreement by following the instructions of the majority with respect to all the cases? If not, may she at least continue to represent the majority? Although the answers have lately become unclear, the traditional answer is no. Loyalty to individual clients precludes the lawyer from vindicating this kind of collective commitment, but such loyalty deprives the individuals of opportunities for effective collective action.

76. MODEL CODE OF PROF'L RESPONSIBILITY DR 5-105(C) (1981).
77. MODEL RULES OF PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.7 (Proposed Official Draft 2003).
78. See, e.g., Brennan's, Inc. v. Brennan's Rest., Inc., 590 F.2d 168 (5th Cir. 1979).
79. See, e.g., Hayes v. Eagle-Picher Indus., Inc., 513 F.2d 892 (10th Cir. 1975) (holding such conduct as violative of the attorney-client relationship).
C. Minimizing Lawyer Accountability to Clients

At the same time that it exalts the individual client and seeks to protect her from outside forces, Legal Liberalism leaves the client vulnerable to the lawyer. The principles of confidentiality and individuation reinforce this vulnerability.

Organized clients generally have the resources and sophistication to hold their lawyers accountable for their performance, but the individual client of whom Legal Liberalism is most solicitous does not. There is substantial indication that lawyers for individual clients commonly exploit them by overcharging or providing negligent or knowingly poor service.\(^8^0\) The reason is not that they are more or less greedy than others, but that the mechanisms of accountability are so weak.

The professional responsibility norms that inhibit the lawyer from establishing relations with both individuals and organizations with which they are affiliated preclude or constrain some of the more plausible monitoring relations. Unions and insurance companies are sometimes in a good position to monitor the quality of service given to their members or insureds, but the bar has successfully resisted such efforts on the ground that they would jeopardize confidentiality and independence of judgment on behalf of the client. Aside from enjoining confidentiality of client information, the bar’s norms forbid allowing a third party who pays for legal services or refers the client to “interfere” or “direct” the lawyer’s conduct.\(^8^1\) Although such norms preclude opportunistic interference, they also preclude benign interference designed to ensure quality of service.\(^8^2\)

For decades, the organized bar sought to prohibit group legal service or legal insurance plans in which lay people had any

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81. MODEL RULES OF PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.8, 5.4(c) (Proposed Official Draft 2003).
82. Another minor but revealing norm is the rule that forbids a lawyer from communicating with a represented adverse party without the advance consent of that party’s lawyer. MODEL RULES OF PROF'L CONDUCT R. 4.2 (Proposed Official Draft 2003). The rule has an obvious legitimate function in protecting the adverse party against over-reaching. The rule often functions, however, to allow a lawyer to prevent his own client from learning about the lawyer’s own incompetence or misconduct from the other side. It is difficult to think of any legitimate reason for the bar’s refusal to permit even written communication to the client with a copy to the lawyer.
executive role or which limited beneficiary choice to a closed panel of lawyers who had a continuing relationship with the group or insurer (and hence would be subject to at least indirect monitoring). The ABA takes the position that, while boards of legal aid programs may review the work of staff lawyers, they may regulate decisions in ongoing cases only through general policies, not through ad hoc review. Legal aid lawyers often resist any qualitative evaluation of their work on the ground that it would interfere with their independent judgment on behalf of the client.

Plaintiffs' lawyers commonly insist that the medical profession is unaccountable, aside from the malpractice system, for medical mistakes. The nonlitigation monitoring of much of medical practice, however, is quite rich compared to the monitoring of most of the practice of plaintiffs' lawyers. American hospitals at least have peer review procedures that do not depend on patient complaints. There is no comparable monitoring procedure for lawyers. The disciplinary agencies of the medical licensing authorities may be lax, but surely no more than the comparable agencies of the bar. The recent Harvard study of medical mistakes, based on a review of randomly chosen treatment files at hospitals, would be inconceivable with respect to tort law practice. No one could obtain access to enough files.

The class action for damages represents another highly unaccountable representative structure. Here the only plaintiffs likely to have direct contact with the lawyer commonly have no significant individual stake, and as a result, no incentive to monitor. Courts are supposed to watch out for the class, but they have limited information and have often shown remarkable disinclination to do so.

In addition, Legal Liberals' inclination to turn dependent people, especially children and the mentally disabled, into rights holders has created more unaccountable representative structures. The paternalistic practices of juvenile courts and mental health

83. See CHARLES W. WOLFRAM, MODERN LEGAL ETHICS 910-17 (1986).
85. See NADER & SMITH, supra note 52, at 290-95.
institutions functioned poorly, but they were potentially more transparent and, to that extent, accountable. The lawyer's insistence on the independence and confidentiality of his relation with clients makes accountability difficult. In the famous Pennhurst case, challenging a Pennsylvania institution for the retarded, the plaintiff's lawyer initially undertook to represent the mother of the named plaintiff, as guardian of her daughter.\(^8\) When the mother objected to his efforts to close, rather than improve, the institution, he indicated that he would take instruction only from the daughter, who was by then an adult, but whose ability to make the relevant decisions was doubtful.\(^9\)

Finally, the liberal legal idea of rights as something to be argued and derived analytically may encourage lawyers to limit client participation. When Derrick Bell questioned whether the NAACP's school desegregation strategy was responsive to the views of members of the client classes, the NAACP's General Counsel Nathaniel Jones replied: "The responsibility I, as chief litigation officer of the NAACP have, is to insure that each plan the NAACP submits to a court ... must square with the legal standards pronounced by the Supreme Court as necessary to effectively vindicate constitutional rights, and bring into being a unitary system."\(^9\)

\textit{D. Diseconomies of Information}

Observers find the American judicial system vastly more expensive than those of the nations to which we usually compare ourselves. Some concede that it has the advantage of accommodating certain large-scale challenges to corporate and government abuse that could not be brought in other systems, but, at the same time, large cases have a potential for waste and opportunism that would not be tolerated in our peer systems.\(^9\) If one turns to the medium and small cases that constitute the bulk of the courts' business, the comparisons seem almost entirely to the disadvantage

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\(^9\) \textit{Id.} at 281-89.
of the American system. Our system is more costly, more unpleasant for litigants and witnesses, and more uncertain than others.

The conclusion that the American system functions poorly is reinforced by the tendency of parties in contractual relations to opt out of the court system by agreeing to private arbitration. To be sure, many of these contracts are contracts of adhesion where the stronger party uses its contracting power to shunt the other into a more favorable process. Even in contracts between parties of comparable resources and sophistication, however, there is a tendency to agree to arbitration. Since these are the cases where the judicial system is least prone to problems of opportunism, the tendency to opt out seems quite damning.

The most salient explanation for the excessive cost, unpleasantness, and uncertainty of the judicial system arises from the extreme degree of partisan control, and perhaps also, its unique reliance on the jury in civil cases. These points are quite harmful to Legal Liberalism, since its commitment to confidentiality and information control gives it a strong affinity for partisan control and its Populism inclines it to embrace the jury. There are, however, two more specific problems that arise under Legal Liberalism’s operating premises. Each involves inefficiency in the production and use of information, and hence, in the possibilities for learning.

1. Disincentives for Producing Information

First, the operating premises of Legal Liberalism create very large demands for information at the same time they make it expensive to obtain. Procedural individuation and the commitment to standards when beneficial to the disadvantaged makes for a very broad range of relevance. The Legal Liberal ideal is the exploration of all the dimensions of the disputed situation, at least all those which a disadvantaged litigant deems relevant. Respect and dignity are equated in part with the fullness and particularity of consideration.

The system, however, makes information difficult to obtain. There are strong confidentiality norms, and there is a discovery process with limited disclosure duties controlled by partisans. Moreover, the nature of the American adversary trial—its combination of compression and adversary control—has unfortunate effects
on the production of information. If people trust a trial system to produce just results, they have incentives to preserve evidence of their conduct so long as they are law-abiding. When someone destroys evidence without an apparent good reason, or fails to create evidence when she would do so in the normal course, a presumption that she is trying to hide something is warranted. On the other hand, if the trial system cannot be trusted, then law-abiding people may rationally fear that evidence of their conduct will be misused to establish liability against them. If this fear is widely recognized, no presumption can be warranted. In a compressed, party-dominated trial proceeding, people may fear that evidence of legitimate conduct, when taken out of context, will be used to support liability. If the dangers are widely recognized, people will cease to regard a failure to document or document destruction as a sign of wrong-doing, and this will remove a major disincentive to these practices.

In fact, growing distrust of the courts seems to have produced a marked tendency in recent decades to minimize documentation. Traditionally, the basic norm among law-abiding businesses was to retain documents as long as any dispute about the relevant event or transaction might arise, say, for the duration of the relevant statute of limitations. In recent years, however, there has been a tendency toward a much more restrictive norm: discard everything immediately unless it will clearly be supportive if a dispute should arise. In addition to advising such policies, attorneys have often counseled clients to refrain from taking notes or memorializing meetings and conversations. Presumably, they believe they can avoid adverse inferences from such practices because juries and officials will recognize that their fear of misuse of such information by the judicial system is reasonable, or at least, genuine. At the

92. Wigmore, supra note 26, § 2524.
93. Such advice was an issue in the prosecution of Arthur Andersen for Enron-related obstruction of justice. Andersen conceded that it had a general practice of destroying documents to prevent their use by plaintiffs' lawyers. The prosecution argued that this suggested consciousness of guilt. Andersen claimed it reflected a fear that the documents would be misused out of context to create false inferences. It appears that the verdict against Andersen was not based on its general destruction policy, but rather on the alteration of a retained document, so the jury may have accepted Andersen's rationale. Jonathan Weil & Alexei Barrionuevo, Duncan Says Fear of Lawsuits Drove Shredding, WALL ST. J., May 15, 2002, at C1; Jonathan Weil et al., Auditor's Ruling: Andersen Win Lifts U.S. Enron Case,
same time, some businesses have channeled discussion of sensitive issues through privileged communications with lawyers. Such practices, of course, reduce the availability of information, and increase uncertainty when disputes arise.

The liberal legal commitment to rights sometimes interacts with confidentiality norms in a perverse way. The categorical view of rights demands that claims be enforced uncompromisingly when made. Making claims requires information, however, and rights to information under Legal Liberalism tend to be weak, in part because of the commitment to confidentiality. This leads defendants to assert confidentiality norms to resist disclosure of information in ways that would be socially valuable, but costly in terms of liability.

For example, recent studies suggest that medical mistakes occur in hospitals at a much greater rate than previously thought, but only one out of seven results in a medical malpractice case. It would be highly desirable for hospitals to disclose data either publicly or to industry organizations in order to assist in self-correction, systems improvement, and regulation. To do so, however, would risk an explosion of malpractice claims. The hospitals insist plausibly that a disclosure regime should involve either assurance that disclosure could not be used for liability purposes or broad malpractice reform with a scaling down of awards. Recent efforts to negotiate such a regime have been scuttled, in substantial part because the trial lawyers vehemently opposed both conditions.

The preoccupation with confidentiality reinforces the inhibition of civic organization by impeding non-judicial investigation and consideration of problems. Members of the lay commission appointed by the Catholic Church to make recommendations about problems of sexual abuse by priests recently complained that some bishops were refusing to provide them with needed information.

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94. For an egregious example, see the account of the cigarette industry's efforts to conceal evidence of the toxicity of their product by putting lawyers in charge of research activities in STANTON A. GLANTZ ET AL., THE CIGARETTE PAPERS 25-46 (1996).

95. Weiler, supra note 86, at 138.

96. See Sarah Glazer, Medical Mistakes: Should Reports of Medical Errors Be Made Public?, THE CQ RESEARCHER, Feb. 25, 2000, at 137-60. There is some irony in the trial lawyers' position, given the parallel between the hospitals' argument for confidentiality of error reporting and the bar's argument for attorney-client privilege.
They attributed this recalcitrance to the influence of lawyers preoccupied with the possibility that cooperation would make information more accessible to prosecutors and plaintiffs' lawyers. Following his resignation, the former chair, Frank Keating, asserted that the noncooperating bishops "turned to their lawyers when they should have looked into their hearts." 97 Another member complained that, while the larger Catholic community believes that "transparency" on the issues is critical, "[t]he attorneys for a diocese do not think that way." 98

2. Lack of Coordination of Dispute Resolution and Regulatory Effects

Although a good legal system functions both to resolve disputes and to regulate conduct generally, the design of the American judicial system minimizes its regulatory value. Clearly, the prospect of liability has an influence on conduct, but the influence is crude, imprecise, and occasionally perverse. Some dangerous products have been taken off the market as a result of lawsuits, and corporate executives are more careful to disclose business information for fear of liability. On the other hand, some useful products have been removed from the market for fear of mistaken imposition of liability and employers do not provide candid evaluations of former employees to prospective new employers for fear of having to defend themselves in defamation suits. 99 On balance, the striking failure of this system is the weakness of its regulatory effects.

Most cases are settled without any liability findings. A settlement has no formal precedential value, and its terms are not necessarily reported at all. Even if they are reported, the basis of the settlement will be unclear, and no liability will have been established. Settled cases thus have limited value either in clarifying the law or generating information that might be useful to either private actors or governments. Unfortunately, cases have to be settled because it

is so expensive to try them. Moreover, even cases that are adjudicated often yield little or no useful information for regulatory purposes. The jury as fact finder is notoriously a black box that usually returns only general verdicts and never explains their conclusions.

In the welfare system, the administrative adjudicatory system has been more or less consciously designed to have no impact on the parallel administrative system of initial claims determination and case maintenance. When Congress and later the courts pushed welfare programs to develop hearings systems with independent, legally-trained decision makers, opportunities for oral presentations, and written decisions with reasons based on the evidence, the programs responded. In most welfare programs, a claimant who files a grievance is likely to get a respectful, procedurally elaborate hearing, and in fact, claimants have tended to win these hearings with significant frequency.

The problem is that adjudicatory decisions have no influence on the cases that claimants do not appeal into the system. In the public assistance programs, the appeal rates are tiny. There has been ample reason to believe that significant numbers of these unappealed decisions would have been reversed if they had been appealed. Often, failure to appeal seems to have been due to ignorance. In effect, these programs operate two parallel systems: a high-quality respectful process and a low-quality impersonal one. The two were quite consciously separated by bureaucratic walls, separate personnel, and specific instructions that administrative workers were to disregard adjudicatory decisions. The situation seems unsatisfactory on both equity and efficiency grounds. Similarly situated claimants are treated differently depending on whether they manage to escape the bureaucratic sphere. At some times, for example, medical conditions routinely deemed by Social Security line administrators insufficient to establish disability have been commonly found disabling by the system's administrative law judges. Welfare hearing officials have applied an estoppel doctrine to excuse eligibility conditions, such as procurement of documentation within specified deadlines, where the administrators failed to provide necessary information or assistance, but no such relief is available to the great majority of denied claimants who do not make it into the hearing system. The relatively rich information gener-
ated in the adjudicatory sphere is not used to improve performance in the administrative one.  

To some extent, this may suggest a problem of misimplementation, rather than a basic defect of Legal Liberalism. There may be, nevertheless, a more fundamental problem. A response to such problems would need to involve some attenuation of the distinction between administration and adjudication. This would improve the quality of administrative decisions, but it might require attenuating the principles of individuation and party control of information in the adjudicatory sphere. One suspects that some liberal lawyers may have preferred to sacrifice the administrative sphere in order to maintain the purity of their vision in the adjudicatory one.

E. Rules and Standard Pathologies

Rules and standards each have disadvantages. The rigidity of rules means that they sometimes compel decisions that are contrary to their underlying purposes. The need to restrict the discretion of the relevant actor requires that she sometimes be forced to make a decision that the legislator would not want a more trusted decision maker to make, but the same rigidity of rules can also expand the discretion of the decision maker. She can pursue goals that the legislator has tried to forbid if she can figure out a way to do so that was not anticipated in the rule's specific terms. Disclosure rules in both the criminal and consumer contexts exemplify both disadvantages. Under the *Miranda* decision and the Truth in Lending Act, certain disclosures have to be made, and the failure to make them, even if harmless, can lead to substantial penalties. On the other hand, if the disclosures are made, compliance is established even if they have not been understood.

With respect to standards, a major problem is the tendency for decisions to become a series of ad hoc determinations with no discernible consistency or principled basis. The one area where liberals have emphasized this problem is the death penalty. In this area, they have condemned decisions under such open-ended norms

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as "outrageously and wantonly vile" and as inevitably arbitrary. Others plausibly complain, however, that decisions under a variety of norms that liberals tend to favor, such as "just cause" for employment termination or eviction, "unreasonable" for malpractice or product safety, and "informed consent" for medical treatment, have the same problem.

The problems of rules and standards are not unique to Legal Liberalism, but they are exacerbated by institutional assumptions that follow from its commitments to Populism and procedural individuation. These assumptions are distrust of the street level public workforce on the one hand and the exaltation of the jury on the other. Distrust of the lower-tier public workforce inclines Legal Liberalism toward rules, but because the rule maker never has enough time or information to anticipate every contingency, or to monitor compliance, the worker retains substantial discretion. Moreover, the rigidity of the rules and the distrust on which they are premised may alienate the worker and exacerbate her inclination either to slack or to find ways around the rules. A common response is to try to make the rules more specific. Here we have the danger of a vicious circle, in which each effort to tighten the rules merely worsens the actors' alienation and resistance, and hence the need for more specification. Such cycles have been played out quite explicitly in the less successful "public law litigation" efforts in which courts have used command-and-control injunctive regulation to try to reform schools, mental health institutions, and prisons.

The contrasting pathology of standards reaches an extreme with the "black box" decision maker of the jury. Juries do not explain their decisions and are not aware of the decisions in analogous situations made by other juries. Thus, there is no way in which such decisions can be made consistent. In both cases, mitigation of the problem requires a culture of collaborative learning. Rules can work when those subject to them have some disposition toward voluntary

102. See, e.g., HUBER, supra note 99, at 11-12, 41-44, 50-51, 157-58 (arguing that jury negligence determinations are arbitrary).
compliance and can be enlisted to provide information needed to update them. In the private sector, the modern manufacturing methods pioneered by the Japanese auto industry exemplify this possibility. 104

Standards can be consistently applied when the decision makers have a common understanding of their underlying purposes and an ability to take account of the decisions made by each other. Decision making by judges is an example. In principle, at any given level, judicial decisions are coordinated in part by the common professional orientation of judges and their commitment to treat the decisions of their peers as persuasive authority. Hierarchical supervision by superior courts plays a role, but it is too limited to do the job alone. Something like such horizontal coordination actually may function with respect to appellate doctrine and even among the federal trial courts with respect to high profile legal issues. Most trial court decisions are not reported, however, and on most issues, trial judges have relatively limited knowledge of what peer courts decide. Further, appellate courts make little effort to review findings of fact in order to reconcile disparities.

Some efforts to achieve consistency are made with trial court decision making. For example, tort reformers have proposed that guidelines based on past awards for various categories of cases be formulated and updated. The guidelines would be presented to the trier of fact, who would have to justify an award outside them with specific findings. 105

Legal Liberalism does not preclude such efforts, but they are in some tension with its commitments to Populism and procedural individuation. Populist distrust of the lower-tier public workforce engenders skepticism about creating a culture of voluntary initiative among public workers. Populist infatuation with the jury discourages taking issues away from it. Some Legal Liberals might oppose efforts to constrain jury discretion through guidelines as an undue limitation on their authority. Regardless of the decision

maker, some would oppose such guidelines as a violation of the principle of procedural individuation.\textsuperscript{106}

III. LEGAL PRAGMATISM

This section elaborates the premises of the body of convergent projects I call Legal Pragmatism. At the risk of overemphasizing the contrast, I have formulated and organized the premises so as to emphasize their differences with Legal Liberalism.

It is debatable whether the Legal Pragmatist perspective is best seen as a competitor to the Legal Liberalism that addresses the whole field of lawyering, or rather as a complement that purports to be more appropriate to a range of situations but that concedes a significant range to the Legal Liberal approach. No doubt, the attitudes and strategies of Legal Pragmatism are more plausible in some situations than others. On the other hand, the Pragmatists seem reluctant to specify limits to the applicability of their approach, and they tend to be ambitious. In the current state of the discussion, therefore, it seems necessary to defer the question of scope.

A. Background Premises

The basic background premises of Legal Pragmatism are the Citizen Perspective, Associative Democracy, and the Priority of Solutions.

1. The Citizen Perspective

Pragmatism is oriented toward citizens. Victimhood connotes weakness, passivity, and self-absorption. Citizenship connotes interest in and capacity for active participation in decision making and at least moderate sensitivity to public values.

Much of the difference between the citizen perspective and the victim perspective of Legal Liberalism is rhetorical. To some extent, the objection to the Victim Perspective is that it lends itself to

\textsuperscript{106} See NONET, \textit{supra} note 19, at 212-14 (stating that development of "judicial ethos" in California Industrial Accident Commission impedes supervision of claims referees who insist they should decide cases "in accordance with our conscience").
sentimentality and patronization, but the difference may go deeper than that. The category of people likely to benefit from the modes of intervention favored by Legal Pragmatism does not coincide with the category most likely to benefit from the interventions favored by Legal Liberalism. In particular, Pragmatist initiatives are likely to bypass the most desperate and the most deviant. Pragmatism supposes a measure of mutual accountability and engagement that may not be attractive to or possible for everyone.

An intentionally provocative illustration of the difference in perspective is reported by Paul Grogan and Tony Proscio in a book on Pragmatist-style social programs that support local economic development. These programs emphasize an unsentimental approach to screening applicants for housing or credit assistance and unhesitatingly reject people with criminal records or bad credit histories:

"You mean you turn people away?" one foundation executive asked incredulously.

"You bet we do," replied Genny Brooks, the founder of the Mid-Bronx Desperadoes, which played so central a role in saving the South Bronx. "We're doing enough, turning this neighborhood around. Don't ask us to take people who won't contribute."

The executive persisted: "But what happens to them?"

Brooks's reply: "I don't care."

No doubt most Pragmatists would dissociate themselves from the vehemence of this repudiation of the Victim Perspective. A more tactful response would have been, "There are other types of programs for them." The drug courts, considered infra Part IV.A., are an example of a Pragmatist-style program oriented to a particularly desperate group, although even programs like these are more selective than many others. For example, addicts charged with violent crimes are ineligible. More importantly, the drug courts treat their subjects in a highly regimented manner. In return for the possibility of more lenient punishment, as well as treatment, they must submit, at least in the short-term, to a regime of

infantilizing control and pervasive surveillance. It seems likely that some would prefer harsher but less intrusive punishment.108

Moreover, while the kind of participatory engagement that the Citizen Perspective connotes is fulfilling for many, it may be a burden for some. Beyond the requirements of time, the need to articulate your views to strangers and to do so in the form of publicly acceptable reasons may be oppressive and alienating.109

2. Associative Democracy

Associative Democracy is the idea that citizens should participate in the design and implementation of the policies that affect them.110 This participation can take a variety of forms, but there is a special emphasis on participation through nongovernmental organizations. Associative Democracy counts on the countervailing power of such organizations to protect against the abuses of governmental and corporate power emphasized by Populism, rather than relying primarily on spontaneous unorganized citizen action, as in traditional Populism, or a virtuous judiciary, as in Legal Liberalism.

Associative Democracy looks in part to the state to foster the conditions of widespread civic association. The state should provide support for associations, subject to conditions of openness and accountability, and should open up access in the policy formulation and implementation process for them. If the Populist asks why the state could be expected to support civic associations, rather than crush or co-opt them in the interests of its own power, the Pragmatist has two answers. The first is that state actors are less rapaciously selfish and more public-spirited than the Populist assumes. The second is that there are potential gains from such a practice for nearly everyone.

108. On drug courts, see infra notes 177-85 and accompanying text.
109. This was the experience of some members of the self-governing workplace studied by Jane Mansbridge. See JANE J. MANSBRIDGE, BEYOND ADVOCACY DEMOCRACY 270-76 (1984). For the suggestion that the more ambitious forms of participatory politics may be unappealing or disadvantageous to minorities, see Derrick Bell & Preeta Bonsal, The Republican Revival and Racial Politics, 97 YALE L.J. 1609, 1610-21 (1988).
Associations can facilitate a more decentralized and flexible mode of policy implementation. They can transmit better information about citizen preferences. They can better induce voluntary cooperation in implementation. In facilitating participation, they induce a type of education and acculturation that potentially creates support for the policies.

For example, standard setting in work safety and pollution control requires local knowledge of changing effects and preferences. Standard enforcement requires continuous monitoring of local practice. Associations seem well adapted to respond to both needs. Thus, work safety regulation in many European countries is considered more effective than in America, in part because the European countries give a major role to unions in both standard-setting and enforcement.¹¹¹ Also, the Legal Pragmatists have shown that grassroots associational activity has played a major role in some of the most promising recent developments in American environmental policy, such as habitat conservation and toxics monitoring.¹¹²

In appealing to the idea of Associative Democracy, Legal Pragmatism resonates with a major turn in American public policy in recent decades. In a variety of programs at all levels of government, there has been a trend to incorporate citizen participation and to provide conditional support for interested voluntary associations. The opportunities for associational participation in regulatory rulemaking have been codified and expanded through measures such as the Negotiated Rulemaking Act.¹¹³ Associations play a more direct role in formulating industry standards for such matters as safety and product quality that acquire legal force through incorporation by legislatures, courts, or agencies. A growing range of public services, from health care to housing, are subcontracted by government to private organizations, many of them nonprofits with

participatory membership structures. Entrepreneurial community-based organizations developing housing, employment, or business opportunities for low-income people have filled some of the space emptied by the contraction of traditional welfare programs.  

The Pragmatist literature nevertheless suggests caution about some of these efforts. Associations have the advantages, in comparison to government, of being closer to their members and more flexible in organization. They have the disadvantages that they are less inclusive and less broadly accountable. Thus, the Pragmatist view does not simply contemplate delegation or devolution. It is not a vision of private voluntarism. Without government intervention, private associations will not necessarily focus on the issues of most pressing public importance, will not be accessible or accountable to many affected constituencies, and will not form at all or will be relatively weak in disadvantaged areas. Thus, Associative Democracy entails strong central government institutions that focus efforts on key issues, provide technical and financial support for associational efforts to deal with them, and assess and enforce organizational openness and accountability.

If Associative Democracy is not voluntarism, neither is it corporatism. Corporatism is a system in which government uses its support and regulation of private associations to dominate them as instruments of policy dictated by state officials. The Pragmatist goal is to achieve support and accountability, while preserving associational independence.

3. The Priority of Solutions

Pragmatist practice is problem solving. A legal claim is a suggestion of a problem that calls for a public solution. From the Pragmatist point of view, the most important difference between solutions and rights is that solutions to public problems cannot be derived analytically. They are best derived deliberatively and experimentally. The Pragmatist objects to the liberal idea of rights enforcement as the elaboration of a pre-existing moral consensus. She sides with the Legal Realist in insisting that whatever

114. SIMON, supra note 69, at 7-40; Freeman, supra note 110, at 551-56.
115. See Lothian, supra note 67, at 1008-11.
normative consensus exists in the society is too incomplete and ambiguous to play the role Legal Liberalism expects.

Whether the Fourth Amendment precludes sweeps of troubled housing projects, whether the right to property or equal treatment requires a fault-based tort system, whether the Equal Protection Clause entails maximum feasible racial balancing—questions like these cannot be answered plausibly solely through textual interpretation or the abstract analysis of principle. Our best judgments about them depend on a range of knowledge that is not derived from the texts in question and does not take the form of principle. These judgments are in substantial part instrumental and strategic; they depend on assumptions about the likely consequences of particular decisions. Thus, the judgments are most plausibly provisional, revisable in the light of later experience. To the extent that problem solving connotes a joint exploration of uncertainty, the term encourages the parties to be candid about the limitations of their understanding.\(^{116}\)

The rhetoric of problems and solutions suggests common interests, rather than the notion connoted by the idea of rights of individual interests competing with group interests. Problem solving connotes the possibility of mutually beneficial outcomes. It treats issues as neither purely distributive nor involving categorical choices between mutually exclusive positions.

This perspective seems more potent in some situations than others. It seems more potent, for example, in connection with school desegregation and tort reform than rent control and abortion. Even with respect to intensely distributive issues such as rent control, some options in the range of possible interpretations and implementations produce higher benefits or lower costs to all parties than others. Even with respect to highly divisive issues like abortion, the competing positions are often indeterminate with respect to specific issues of elaboration or implementation—for example, if the mother has presumptive autonomy, how far into the pregnancy it extends; or if there is no presumptive autonomy, whether abortion should nevertheless be allowed to save her life.

The Pragmatist does not ignore conflicting interests or value dissensus. She merely assumes, first, that any given set of issues is likely to involve shared as well as conflicting interests and values, and second, that it is often a mistake to try to determine in advance of the dispute resolution process which type of values and interests predominate. If the process is properly designed, neither the individual nor the community can know what their interests are before entering it. Each party's conception of her own goals may change in the course of the process because each may learn things in the process about the possibilities for realizing them.

Thus, Pragmatism declines to single out a particular category of interests as categorical or trump-like. It doesn't deny that there are interests whose value is infinite or that certain types of rationales are inadmissible. It does suggest that these categories are smaller than Legal Liberalism tends to suppose and that the attempt to wall them off in advance of discussion will rarely be useful.

The distinction should not be exaggerated. Every discussion needs starting points. Every negotiation presupposes a set of endowments and assumptions about what will happen in the absence of agreement. The distinctive tendency of Pragmatism is to insist, as a descriptive matter, that these starting points are usually indeterminate, and as a normative one, that people should regard them as provisional.

The Pragmatist conception of problem solving connotes a less bounded activity than rights enforcement. A right connotes a claim for an individual benefit, and rights enforcement connotes finality. Liberal lawyering is a series of discrete self-contained cases. By contrast, in Pragmatism problems can ramify broadly, and problem solving is a continuous activity. Every resolution is provisional and incorporates assumptions about its evolution and potential transformation.

Thus, a problem can have a range of dimensions. It could be a demand for compensation for a particular injury or it could be a challenge to an established processing for compensating such injuries. Pragmatism blurs the distinction between moves within a

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117. Many liberal lawyers do not, in fact, think of their work in this way. They think of their cases as having a cumulative significance in terms of over-arching projects. But this is just one of several ways in which their ideological premises are inconsistent with their more fundamental self-conception.
framework and challenges to frameworks. An ostensibly routine complaint is a possible source of information and initiative that may suggest broader revisions. The dimensions of the problem may change in the course of discussion.

The courts are less central in this view. In the first place, assumptions about what institutions are good for have to be tested by experience, not incanted as dogma from eighteenth century political theory. The American judiciary appears to be doing a very poor job of enforcing a broad range of rights. In the second place, problem solving usually requires collaboration among different kinds of institutions.

Finally, Legal Pragmatism is inclined to focus on future collective benefit rather than compensation for past wrongdoing. It emphasizes the high cost of pursuing corrective justice through the legal system. Proving and punishing wrongdoing is costly both because it requires difficult factual inquiries about the connection between past conduct and current injury and because it polarizes the parties and encourages procedural conflict. Judicial decisions about rights are increasingly controversial and often fail to alleviate feelings of injustice, or may aggravate them. The distinction between people who suffer injuries from past wrongdoing and those who suffer from similar conditions but cannot trace them to specific wrongdoing seems arbitrary in many contexts.

As an example of the Legal Pragmatist emphasis on solutions, consider a proposal by Archon Fung, Dara O'Rourke, and Charles Sabel for the human rights problem of international labor standards. They propose a system of auditing conducted by nongovernmental organizations in accordance with agreed performance measures. The results, as well as the basis of the audit, would be publicly reported. Firms with similar products could be compared within and across nations. The more successful firms could be rewarded in various ways, such as procurement preferences by public and nongovernmental organizations, consumer goodwill, or good public relations. The less successful would be penalized through analogous mechanisms. For them, the key point is that standards could be expected to ratchet upward, as the

119. Id. at 4-5.
frotnrunner firms demonstrated possibilities of better performance.¹²⁰

They favor this approach over a more conventional one that would set universal minimum conditions and impose a single set of powerful sanctions against violators. They object that there is no way to derive such conditions analytically and that no institution could acquire enough information to formulate such criteria effectively. They argue that compliance should not be prescribed in general categorical terms. Different expectations should be applied to countries in different circumstances, and standards should be revised quickly as new learning becomes available. Their approach is only indirectly punitive. It tries to acknowledge and harness the common interests of firms and workers in technological advance that makes better working conditions and productivity possible.

B. Operating Premises

The core operating premises of Legal Pragmatism are stakeholder negotiation, transparency, and rolling rule regimes.

1. Stakeholder Negotiation

Ideally, problems are solved by negotiation among the people and groups interested in them. Effective negotiation involves central public institutions supporting and channeling a decentralized deliberative process.¹²¹

a. Deliberation

Deliberation connotes openness and reason giving. Openness means both a commitment to volunteer relevant information and a willingness to consider opposing positions. Reason giving means an effort to explain and discuss one's position in terms of general or

¹²⁰ Id. at 27-29.
The effects of limiting this condition will depend on the circumstances. In many contexts, such as small informal groups of people accustomed to speaking in this manner, it should not exclude first person narratives or discussions of feelings. What the reason giving condition most commonly constrains is bargaining based on threats or claims about the relative power of the parties to inflict injury on each other. The main objection to such bargaining is that it impedes the search for mutually beneficial solutions.

The goal of negotiation is consensus, or voluntary agreement by all stakeholders on the basis of a shared normative understanding. It would, of course, be naïve to think that such a goal can be routinely, or even often, attained, and Pragmatists are usually ready to settle for much less. The consensus ideal, however, plays an important heuristic role. Striving for consensus, even when unsuccessful, expresses respect for all stakeholders and puts pressure on the parties to try to understand each other and search for mutually beneficial solutions.

Of course, negotiation necessarily takes place against a background in which participants have selfish interests and assumptions about their distributive entitlements. The Pragmatist, however, relies on bootstrapping—the bracketing of self-interest and distributive claims—in order to focus attention on common interests and values. The bootstrapping idea is that, once participants start to search for mutually beneficial solutions, both their conceptions of the problems and the range of plausible responses are likely to change. As this happens, the boundaries of self-interest and the distinction between distributive claims and policy responses are likely to blur. As long as there is any possibility of significant, mutually beneficial exchange, people cannot be sure what their interests are. If they cannot be sure what their interests are, they cannot be sure whether and to what extent it is in their interests to assert their rights. Once they start, the more daring the

122. See Fung et al., supra note 118, at 78-80.
124. Id. at 6-7.
solutions considered, the less clear it will be how they map onto the selfish interests of the parties. To the extent that this mapping is impeded, the parties find themselves forced into a kind of "original position" in which they have to decide on the basis of the common interests because they cannot figure out what their individual interests are.\textsuperscript{126}

Consider, for example, the positions of public defenders and treatment providers deliberating about a drug court regime.\textsuperscript{127} The public defenders may fear that they will lose prominence once treatment becomes the focus of the process. The treatment providers may anticipate greater prominence. But the new regime subjects the treatment providers to new mechanisms of accountability that may reduce their autonomy and result in reduced rewards for the less effective ones. The new accountability procedures may create new roles for the lawyers. It is hard to be selfish when you cannot figure out what your position will be.

Bootstrapping is the Legal Pragmatist's substitute for, or complement to, Republican civic virtue. The Republican citizen is motivated to virtue by a strong sense of solidarity and honor. For the Pragmatist citizen, such dispositions are supplemented by social circumstances that present them with the possibility of generally valuable reforms in which they cannot clearly separate individual from collective interests.

Note that the bootstrapping idea implies a different view of legal process from the one often associated with the common law that emphasizes the virtues of narrow controversies and case-by-case decision making. In Cass Sunstein's recent version of the common law perspective, by deciding "one case at a time" within narrow frameworks, we get the benefits of "incompletely theorized agreement.\textsuperscript{128} We resolve conflicts more readily by looking for a confined space where differing views converge and bracketing broader issues on which it will be harder to reach agreement.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{See generally id.}

\textsuperscript{127} \textit{See Dorf \& Sabel, Drug Courts, supra note 4, at 852-65} (discussing the blurring of traditional rules for judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys practicing in the context of a treatment court).

\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Cass Sunstein, One Case at a Time} 11 (1999).

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Id.} at 11-13.
The Pragmatist approach has some kinship with this view. Part of the idea of problem solving is to focus attention on matters that are of practical importance to the participants and thus divert attention from merely abstract, moot, or academic disagreement. Defining issues in practical terms, however, is not the same as defining them narrowly. In Pragmatist negotiation, problems have a tendency to expand. A discussion about police responses to street crime may implicate a landlord’s tolerance of drug dealing or the housing code agency’s failure to cite the landlord for code violations, or the park department’s failure to light a neighboring public facility at night. A discussion of failing student performances might start out with a focus on the classroom practices of particular teachers but might move to the patterns of collaboration and supervision of the school as a whole.

Moreover, enlarging the problem has a tendency to increase the bootstrap effect. As the problem is defined more broadly and the spectrum of potential resolutions grows, the difficulty of mapping self-interest, and the consequent openness to possibilities of mutual benefit, intensifies. No doubt there are dangers of unconstrained expansion of issues, but the Pragmatist approach emphasizes advantages that the common law approach ignores.

**b. Background Institutions**

Negotiation takes place in the shadow of a court or other governmental institution. These background institutions perform three roles. First, they induce affected parties to negotiate and ensure their representation. In particular, especially powerful stakeholders may see no need to negotiate without pressure. Some stakeholders may be excluded without central intervention on their behalf. A common criticism of negotiated settlements, or “devolved collaboration,” in environmental regulation is that they are often concluded without adequate representation of key stakeholders. For example, the Quincy Library Group settlement between local logging and resident interests in California’s Plumas National Forest, which has been approved in a federal statute and promoted as a model for environmental regulatory negotiation, was concluded without the participation of the United States Forest Service or any
national environmental groups. Luke Cole, reporting on three negotiations by "local assessment committees" over a toxic waste facility siting under a California statute, concludes that two were unsuccessful because no one effectively represented poorer and Latino residents of affected communities.

The government can try to promote representation by prescribing it as a condition of support or as a condition of giving legal efficacy to negotiated arrangements. Local school councils, for example, in "new accountability" educational reforms typically must have designated numbers of representatives for parents and teachers, elected by each constituency. Often, negotiation and representation can be induced indirectly by the setting of defaults. Logging interests that were previously unwilling to negotiate about the Plumas forest were brought to the table by a federal regulation drastically reducing the amount of timber they could harvest without some kind of variance or waiver. The Endangered Species Act has induced landowners to negotiate over ecosystem governance by effectively making large-scale development of many sites impossible in the absence of local stakeholder agreement.

Representation of disadvantaged groups can be encouraged by giving them strong rights to block settlements negotiated in their absence. In many cities for example, strong resident rights to challenge major real estate development encourage developers to negotiate with community groups.

It is not important that these default conditions be precise, and indeed, it is often desirable that they be uncertain. The conditions might then perform as a kind of "penalty default"—a result that no one wants, and thus gives everyone an incentive to search for alternatives.


132. See Duane, supra note 130, at 786.

133. See Karkkainen, Adaptive Ecosystem Management, supra note 112, at 970-75.

134. See SIMON, supra note 69, at 69-78.

Second, the background institutions provide support for the negotiations. One or more of the parties may require professional assistance, such as a mediator or facilitator, in structuring and conducting the negotiation. To the extent that understanding of the problem requires factual information or technical expertise, researchers and experts may be helpful.

Archon Fung's study of local participation in school decentralization and "community policing" reforms in Chicago gives examples.\textsuperscript{136} Fung finds that participation in both processes is as extensive in poor and minority neighborhoods as in others, and he finds evidence of efficacy in poor and minority neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{137} He also emphasizes the importance of support from the city. In one of the schools where the parents' council seems to have made a difference, the council was able to collaborate only after the school's poor performance triggered the arrival of an intervention team of professionals from the board of education. The team's report drew the council's attention to issues they had not considered before and helped them organize their discussions.\textsuperscript{138} Similarly, participation in setting policing priorities in a mixed income district was dominated by residents of its relatively affluent sector at the expense of poorer neighborhoods until a facilitator provided by the police department helped organize the meetings. The marginalization of the poorer residents was apparently not deliberate; it arose from an unstructured style of conducting meetings that favored more self-confident and articulate speakers. When the facilitator adopted a more systematic approach, new voices emerged, and the group developed consensus around a different set of priorities.\textsuperscript{139}

Third, the court or coordinate institutions give legal form or effect to the solution and assist in monitoring and enforcement. The role of the state is not to impose or divine an outcome, but to induce and assist the parties to negotiate one and to assist in its implementation.

\textsuperscript{136} See generally Fung \textit{et al.}, supra note 118.
\textsuperscript{137} Id.
\textsuperscript{138} See id. at 86-87.
\textsuperscript{139} See id. at 96-97.
2. Rolling Rule Regimes

Just as every default rule is regarded as no more than a starting point to be readily discarded as better options are discovered, every negotiated consensus is a starting point for a continuous effort of implementation. Legal Pragmatism resists the tendency in some versions of the Alternative Dispute Resolution movement to celebrate agreement as a definitive resolution of conflict. It makes no strong distinction between negotiation and implementation. Even if entirely in good faith, the parties will not be able to anticipate the contingencies that arise in implementation. These contingencies will generate new information and present both challenges and learning opportunities. Thus, a pragmatist solution incorporates procedures for self-revision.

Moreover, while Pragmatism does count deliberative negotiation's potential to induce good will among participants as a virtue, it does not rely more than marginally on altruism. The implementation regime is thus a regime of accountability designed to hold participants to their commitments in a precise way.

The term “rolling rule regime” expresses this notion of implementation as a process of both learning and accountability. A rolling rule regime includes process norms and performance norms. The process norms specify how operations are conducted, such as how teachers address a particular reading difficulty, how manufacturers handle a toxic chemical, and how drug treatment providers respond to client relapse. The performance norms measure the results of such operations, such as the levels at which students read, the amount of use or discharge of a toxic, and the degree of the addict's self-control. Commonly, though not invariably, actors are assessed primarily on the basis of performance norms.

Although actors typically must adopt explicit process norms, they have discretion over which ones to adopt. In this approach, the process norms are not a direct basis for sanction or reward, as the performance norms play this role. The process norms have two functions. First, they encourage systematic, self-conscious planning and self-appraisal within each institutional actor. Explicit norms make the practices easier to teach to those who were not part of the discussions that produced them. Even for the participants, the pressure to be explicit can enhance mutual understanding. Reliance
on tacit understanding runs the risk that the parties are making different assumptions without realizing it and the duty to explicate one's assumptions can often clarify thought.

Second, process norms facilitate diagnosis and learning among institutions. When actors lag in performance, outside evaluators can more readily determine the problem when the practices are explicitly defined. When actors perform well, their peers can learn from their success by consulting their process norms. Thus, the process norms of the most successful actors become "best practices" available for incorporation by peer institutions.\textsuperscript{140}

For example, in new accountability education reform, districts and schools adopt improvement plans consisting of process norms. Often, teachers must have explicit lesson plans for each class and sometimes even explicit improvement plans for each student. The institutions and the teachers get support from central institutions, and struggling institutions and teachers receive firm direction, but they will retain a range of discretion. They are then periodically assessed by outcome measures, such as standardized test scores, drop-out rates, attendance and truancy patterns, and completion of college course requirements. Performance scores are publicly reported and trigger rewards, sanctions, and assistance.\textsuperscript{141}

In the safety monitoring regime of the nuclear power industry, plants must have detailed protocols for matters such as maintenance and responses to operating irregularities. At the same time, they are periodically assessed on such measures as radiation emission levels, lost work time from any type of accident, and unplanned shutdowns. Performance rankings based on these measures are adjusted for plant size and distributed throughout the industry and to regulators.\textsuperscript{142}

Norms in this type of regime have four key characteristics. The first is \textit{continuous revision}. The process is driven first by the performance measures, as poor performance prompts review of the actor's process norms and a search for better practice models among

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{140} These practices have been adopted from industrial management. See Michel Greif, \textit{The Visual Factory: Building Participation Through Shared Information} 173-260 (1991).
\item \textsuperscript{141} See Lieberman & Sabel, supra note 4, at 239-50.
\item \textsuperscript{142} See Joseph Rees, \textit{Hostages of Each Other: The Transformation of Nuclear Power Safety Since Three Mile Island} 67-120 (1994); Dorf & Sabel, supra note 4, at 371-75.
\end{itemize}
more successful peers. In addition, the performance norms themselves are also reconsidered. The participants have to be open to the possibility that a poor score may indicate a defect in the measure, rather than in the performance, or the possibility that, even if the score is high, the norm is having counter-productive effects. If the norm forces "teaching to the test" by focusing on a narrow range of instruction that has little benefit outside the test, then there should be discussion of changing or revising the test or supplementing it with alternative measures.

The second characteristic of a rolling rule regime is *local experimentation*. Actors must plan explicitly and collaboratively. Schools need improvement plans. Drug treatment centers must have treatment plans. Industries in Massachusetts must have reduction plans for toxic use, yet they retain discretion over the contents of the plans. The best performers are unconstrained. The worst are more closely supervised but still retain discretion to tailor the plan to their own assessments of local conditions.

The third characteristic of rolling rule regimes is *scaling*. Conventional regulations are binary. They specify fixed conditions of compliance in which an actor is either in compliance or not. In contrast, a rolling performance measure often ranks the actor on a graded metric. The California prison medical care assessment system prescribes for the weighting of various performance measures to produce a single audit score for each institution.\(^{143}\) The Texas Public School Accountability System produces report cards for each school that shows how the school ranks on various measures in comparison to institutions with similar socioeconomic student bodies.\(^{144}\) The Toxics Release Inventory shows discharges of specified toxics from each reporting facility in terms of numbers of pounds.\(^{145}\) This approach gives more precise information than a binary compliance norm. It enables identification of the more serious failures among the lagging performers. It makes it possible to measure improvement of a particular actor's performance.\(^{146}\) It also yields information about the frontier of possibility from the


\(^{144}\) TEX. EDUC. CODE ANN. § 39.052 (Vernon 2004).

\(^{145}\) See Karkkainen, *supra* note 4, at 289-90.

\(^{146}\) Id. at 286-87.
superior performers.\textsuperscript{147} The regimes often specify minimum performance scores and attach consequences for failure to meet them, but these minima are provisional. The expectation is that they will ratchet up, as the leaders push back the frontiers. This might be the expectation in a conventional regime of binary norms as well, but unlike a rolling rule regime, the enforcement of a binary regime does not itself generate the information needed for revision of the norms.\textsuperscript{148}

Finally, rolling rule regimes require \textit{standardization} to facilitate comparability. Comparative assessment is only possible when performance is measured in common terms. Thus, a key rule of central institutions in a rolling rule regime is to devise and propagate common metrics. Standardized tests perform this role in education. Some regimes provide an explicit structure designed to facilitate comparison. Thus, the Texas education regime constructs, for each school a set of socio-economically comparable peers against which it is compared on various dimensions.\textsuperscript{149} The Toxics Release Inventory is less structured. It simply mandates disclosure of discharges in terms of a simple metric—pounds—along with accompanying information about the nature of the facility. Users can combine the data in various ways, depending on their interests. For example, they can determine discharge in relation to facility size or density of surrounding population.\textsuperscript{150}

From the point of view of system design, the key task is to devise measures that are uniform and that track the dimensions in which comparative measurement is most important. Some earlier school testing regimes produced scores that were valid only at the district level, rather than the school level. This is inadequate for a system that gives basic initiative to schools. A test system that reports only school averages risks overlooking the shortchanging of poor or

\textsuperscript{147} Id. at 300-02.

\textsuperscript{148} Not all regimes that invoke pragmatist themes and rhetoric have this scaled quality. For example, the fair labor practice norms of the Social Accountability 8000 standards are binary and lead to a single categorical judgment regarding certification. See Social Accountability International, \textit{SA8000 Overview}, at http://www.cepaai.org/SA8000.htm (last visited Sept. 9, 2004). From a Legal Pragmatist point of view, this is a serious failing. The standard would be more effective if it formulated scaled performance metrics and mandated disclosure of audit assessments.

\textsuperscript{149} Liebman & Sabel, supra note 4, at 241.

\textsuperscript{150} See Karkkainen, \textit{supra} note 4, at 261.
minority students in mixed-race or mixed-income schools. Thus, the new systems typically report separately for different racial and income groups.\textsuperscript{151}

Viewed in jurisprudential terms, the rolling rule regime represents an important contribution to the analysis of the choice between rules and standards. We saw that Legal Liberalism tends to opt for rules for people it does not trust and standards for people it trusts. Both moves prove disappointing because the rule maker never has enough information to frame or enforce the rules properly, and standards-based decision making tends to become inconsistent and unaccountable.

In contemporary industrial practice, as pioneered in the Japanese automobile industry, however, the Pragmatists found a type of normative approach that is not captured by the idea of either rule or standard as they appear in the legal literature.\textsuperscript{152} In the Toyota manufacturing system, the practice of most workers is specified by minutely detailed written norms.\textsuperscript{153} Viewed statically, these norms are conventional rules, but viewing them statically ignores an important dimension. In practice, situations frequently arise in which it is impossible or inappropriate to follow the rules. One approach to such a situation that is characteristic of other production systems is to build into the rules some standard exception for extraordinary situations, or simply to afford tacit discretion to disregard the rules when following them would be counterproductive. The Toyota approach is different, as ad hoc adjustments to unforeseen circumstances are discouraged. The preferred response is to suspend operations in order to consider what is wrong with the norms, to revise them in accordance with specified procedures that look somewhat like stakeholder negotiation, and then to recommence in accordance with the restated norms.\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{151} Liebman & Sabel, \textit{supra} note 4, at 207-13, 246-49.


\textsuperscript{153} GReif, \textit{supra} note 140, at 65-68.

The process thus combines, in a manner not contemplated by rules-and-standards jurisprudence, the form of the rule with the continuous adjustment to unanticipated particularity associated with the standard. Of course, decisions vary in the extent to which they lend themselves to formalization. And there are different avenues to formalization; paradigmatic examples can be used instead of indicative commands. The basic idea is to capture as explicitly as is feasible a constantly changing practice.

The kind of industrial practice exemplified by Toyota appears to have influenced recent practice with respect to social policy. In their study of school reform, Liebman and Sabel observe in some of the most notable developments, such as the much admired work of District 2 in Manhattan, a trend toward practices that combine formalization with continuous self-assessment and revision in ways analogous to the Toyota system and quite foreign to the rules vs. standards analysis. The traditional conception of professional practice is based on standards. Practice takes the form of partly tacit knowledge informally communicated among peers through observation of exemplary performances and case studies. But the new approaches in places like District 2 demand systematic articulation and assessment of practices through detailed lesson and student improvement plans and standardized testing.

3. Transparency

The third operating premise is transparency, or open access to information. The premise applies at two levels. At the level of stakeholder negotiations, the parties must commit to volunteer material information. This is a prerequisite for both trust and effective learning.

At a general level, transparency is essential to the kind of information pooling that facilitates peer comparisons and the learning they generate. Thus, we have seen that an important role of background institutions is both to develop metrics to facilitate the comparison of data across institutions and to create incentives for these institutions to make information available.

155. Liebman & Sabel, supra note 4, at 221-23.
156. See, e.g., supra notes 149-50 and accompanying text.
The Pragmatist view of transparency involves a significant challenge to the Legal Liberal's values of confidentiality and lawyer information control. Pragmatism can probably accommodate a limited confidentiality for intimate matters and perhaps proprietary business information, but it is committed to oppose broad professional evidentiary privileges and confidentiality duties, weak discovery and disclosure systems, and compressed, histrionic, partisan-dominated trial proceedings. The Citizen Perspective and the Associative Democracy principles also suggest that, where direct participation in public decision making is possible, it should not be strongly dependent on professional representatives.

The Pragmatist program thus rejects the bar's argument for confidentiality as a safe harbor in which people can make disclosures they would otherwise be afraid to make to lawyers who will channel them along law-abiding paths. Among many objections to this view, two are especially salient in Legal Pragmatism. First, at most, the bar's argument promises compliance with established requirements.¹⁵⁷ In a regime of continuous revision, this is insufficient. For the latter purpose, any information that might disclose problems with or potential improvements to the rules is relevant. Disclosure may be important even where there is compliance with the rules in their current formulation.

Second, the lawyers' approach to confidentiality deals with a real need in a crude and heavy-handed way. The real need is to induce transparency. The lawyer's approach is a categorical safe harbor for disclosures, as long as they are made to lawyers. This approach is overinclusive, since it immunizes many disclosures that would be made anyway or that have little social value because the lawyer's response does not lead to compliance. It is also underinclusive because it is limited to lawyers.

Consider again the question of disclosure of medical errors. A regime of continuous improvement would require pooling of information by hospitals about both errors and efforts to correct them. If such disclosure would expose them to a massive increase in lawsuits and damage judgments, however, the hospitals would feel constrained to forego it. For their part, the trial lawyers invoke

the Legal Liberal principle of confidentiality and lawyer information control to insist that the only confidential disclosures the hospitals can make are to their lawyers. Discussions with lawyers, of course, are of little use for the purpose of systemic improvement. 158

The commitment to transparency implies a corresponding disposition against harsh punitive sanctioning. Pragmatism tends to favor soft enforcement. Failure triggers supportive intervention first. When it does trigger coercive sanctions, they are often mild or indirect, such as the shaming associated with publicly disclosed poor performance. Sometimes severe but vague sanctions, in the nature of penalty defaults to induce negotiations, are threatened, but they are seldom applied. 159 Of the characteristic sanctions in pragmatist regimes, the most severe involve not punishment, so much as loss of control. The ultimate sanction prescribed for failure in public institutions is receivership.

The Texas Public School Accountability System is an especially well-developed example. It forces broad public disclosure of a large amount of information pertinent to assessing school performance, but indicia of poor performance do not lead immediately to harsh consequences. Indeed, poor performers initially receive targeted resources to assist them in improvements. The main sanctions involve loss of autonomy, such as increased supervision by central authorities and ultimately receivership, but these are gradually phased in over time. 160

Pragmatism has three reservations about punitive enforcement. First, failure often arises from incapacity rather than deliberate action. 161 If this is the case, punishment may simply aggravate the situation. Critics assert that some high stakes testing reforms that attach substantial financial rewards or penalties for teachers and principals to student performance on standardized tests are misguided. 162 Some of these tests measure performance in ways that provide relatively little diagnostic information pertinent to teaching

158. See Institute of Medicine, To Err Is Human: Building a Safer Health System 86-131 (Linda T. Kohn et al. eds., 2000).
159. See infra note 198 and accompanying text.
160. See Liebman & Sabel, supra note 4, at 209-10.
practices. Moreover, most poor performers require some assistance to identify and rectify the practices associated with their poor performances. The 1996 welfare reform legislation has also been criticized for combining arbitrarily strict outcome standards with counter-productively harsh sanctions.\textsuperscript{163} Such measures seem to invoke the rhetoric of decentralization and experimentation to cosmeticize reckless dracoonian cutbacks. The regimes most consistent with the Pragmatist view downplay tangible sanctions and emphasize assistance for change.

Second, severe punishment requires a considerably higher level of information than softer or less hostile interventions. For any intervention, the regulator has to calculate both the compliance threshold that will trigger it and its proper magnitude. Severe punitive interventions may be less reversible than others and hence require more planning and information. If severe sanctions cause a school or a plant to close, it may not be easy to reconstitute it. Moreover, the prospect of severe sanctions triggers defensive responses on the part of those facing the sanctions and invokes expensive legal procedures. The evidentiary threshold the courts require to sustain a punitive regulation or its application in a particular case is often expensive and sometimes prohibitive. By contrast, softer interventions can be made informally.

Finally, the prospect of severe punishment increases the costs of transparency to some participants and encourages them to distort or resist disclosure. At worst, it induces fraud. "High stakes testing" in education appears to have inspired a substantial amount of cheating and misreporting by teachers.\textsuperscript{164} At best, it discourages voluntary disclosure and fuels claims for confidentiality or proprietary rights with respect to information of public importance. The recent increase in criminal prosecutions for lying to federal investigators or congressional committees may have had a bigger effect in discouraging people from volunteering information for fear they will inadvertently incur liability than in deterring deliberate lying.\textsuperscript{165} The tendency we noted above of witnesses to refuse to

\textsuperscript{164} Fung, supra note 121, at 98.
speak in Congressional hearings without the presence of lawyers is sometimes explained in these terms.

Pragmatist programs tend to reserve the most severe sanctions for violation of disclosure duties. Examples of approaches in this spirit are safe harbors for accurate disclosure, ranging from the South African Truth Commission to the products liability provisions of the Restatement (Third) of Torts that give manufacturers immunity from tort damages if they comply with applicable administrative regulations and disclose any information they have suggesting that the regulations are inadequate. Similarly, the enforcement activity most emphasized in these regimes is the independent auditing of performance assessment reports. To an extent, these programs are premised on the idea that, if the integrity of the information is assured, proper conduct will follow without punishment.

The Pragmatists emphasize that, without formal state-imposed sanctions, transparency can trigger informal pressures for compliance. Clearly, to the extent that noncompliance results from incapacity, and transparency succeeds in exposing both poor performance and the methods associated with adequate performance, it can be self-enforcing. Moreover, private producers sometimes discover that compliance with regimes designed to achieve social goals has unanticipated synergies with cost-cutting and product quality strategies that enhance profitability. It also seems clear that pride in good performance and shame at bad performance will create incentives of compliance in a regime of transparent performance ranking.

For private producers, reputation potentially influenced by performance rankings can affect profitability through customer choices. A sufficiently large fraction of consumers of some products are influenced by concerns on such matters as a maker's labor or

169. Rees attributes substantial effects to forces of honor and shame associated with intra-industry disclosure of safety performance rankings in the nuclear power industry. REES, supra note 142, at 106-18.
environmental practices for manufacturers to be intensely concerned about their public images with respect to these matters. Such concerns have prompted many garment manufacturers to sign up for various monitoring regimes. General Motors and Ford are among the companies which require all of their suppliers to have their environmental practices certified under the International Standard Organization’s environmental management norms, also known as ISO 14001, apparently out of concern for public relations.

No doubt the strength of the customer reputation effect varies with issue and product, but it can be large. As this is being written, a major decline in the value of Martha Stewart’s media company is being attributed in substantial part to the effect on her image of her indictment and conviction in connection with trading in the stock of Imclone. As the loss in value is in the range of hundreds of millions of dollars, the potential formal sanction is trivial in comparison.

In the public sphere, transparent assessment regimes can interact with the electoral process. School reforms often accompany rolling rule regimes with the establishment or invigoration of elected school site councils, sometimes with powers to hire and fire principals. The report card sent to parents by the Texas regime is designed in part to influence their votes for local school officials.

Local public officials may consider the performance rankings of industries in deciding how to exercise their discretion with respect to such matters as land use permissions, regulatory waivers, or the allocation of business subsidies. Industries may strive to avoid low ratings for fear that, even though no punitive sanctions are currently provided, they may prompt citizens to push for harsh sanctions in the future, or that courts may decide that they indicate that tort duties of care have been violated. Such vague background threats of liability may be far more effective than specific and explicit ones. Performance rankings are more easily revisable,

less likely to generate expensive legal challenges, and more likely to prompt productive discussion and negotiation.

Some combination of these informal pressures apparently explains the success of the federal Toxics Release Inventory and the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act. The federal statute requires only public disclosure of toxic discharges. The Massachusetts act requires a plan for reducing toxic use, but does not mandate any quantity of reduction. The statutes only impose sanctions for failure to disclose and, in the Massachusetts case, to plan, yet both appear to have induced substantial reductions in toxic pollution.

The transparency commitment implies a loss for lawyers of the comparative advantage that the attorney-client evidentiary privilege gives them over their competitors and a concurrent need to develop new practice models. Conventional litigation practice and the forms of transactional practice dominated by distributive bargaining are both unsuited to Pragmatist problem solving. Recently, lawyers have been experimenting with different practice styles in connection with Alternative Dispute Resolution; and in business contexts, lawyers, often pushed by their clients, have been exploring collaborative problem-solving approaches. These latter styles of practice seem more promising from a Pragmatist perspective.

IV. TWO CASE STUDIES

Pragmatists are inclined to pursue their ideas in particular practical contexts. Since much recent Pragmatist work takes the form of case studies, we can best pursue the themes of Legal Pragmatism by looking at two of them: Michael Dorf and Charles Sabel's study of drug courts and Susan Sturm's study of second generation employment litigation. In each case, I first summarize the authors' account of the operations in question, emphasizing how they approximate the operating premises of Legal Pragmatism,

176. See generally Dorf & Sabel, Drug Courts, supra note 4; Sturm, supra note 4.
then consider how they implicate the Pragmatist background premises of Citizenship, Associational Democracy, and the Priority of Solutions.

A. Drug Courts

The drug court idea emerged in the 1990s in response to the burden on courts and prisons resulting from the explosion in drug prosecutions, as well as continuing doubts about the efficacy of traditional punishment practices for drug-related offenses. There are now more than 400 local drug courts around the country, encouraged by grants from the federal government and various foundations.

It has long been recognized that the traditional criminal justice paradigm fits poorly with many nonviolent, drug-related crimes. This paradigm treats each prosecution as a self-contained episode of wrongdoing, which it seeks to resolve by a discrete punishment. From the defense perspective of Legal Liberalism, a key role for the defense lawyer is to impede, as much as possible, the access of the prosecution and the court to inculpatory information. The defense lawyer will pressure the defendant not to volunteer information, will seek to exclude information that was improperly procured, and will attack incomplete or ambiguous features of the prosecution’s case. More commonly, she will negotiate away the defendant’s right to these maneuvers in return for a reduced punishment.

An addiction-related criminal act is virtually always a continuing phenomenon. Without effective treatment, the defendant is highly likely to return to the system. To the extent that effective treatment is possible, the defendant shares an interest with the community in receiving treatment. Punishment is expensive, and the purely retributive concerns with crimes of this sort are small. Thus, courts have long been willing to trade punishment for treatment as a condition of probation. What is new about the drug courts is the way treatment is made the central institutional focus (rather than, say, relegated to a peripheral probation department) and the way the court’s processes are structured.

177. Dorf & Sabel, Drug Courts, supra note 4, at 841-43, 846.
In the most common drug court model, if the defendant asks and the prosecutor consents, charges are filed in the drug court. If the defendant concedes guilt, treatment becomes the focus of the proceedings. The defendant, the court's staff, and one or more treatment providers under contract with the court negotiate a treatment plan. The plan puts the defendant in one of several treatment bands, which specifies obligations on the part of the defendant and the service provider, as well as sanctions for non-compliance. The band determines the defendant's duties, including the frequency of urine testing, program attendance, court appearances and case management meetings. A schedule of sanctions is specified for different infractions. The program treats infractions as normal in the sense of likely, but it also emphasizes the importance of calibrated sanctions. Compliance is rewarded by progression through less and less restrictive bands. At each stage, the defendant gets more autonomy.179

The defendant appears periodically before the judge, accompanied by a report on his progress by the primary treatment provider. In the event of an infraction, the judge decides from a menu of specified sanctions. The judge can also consider proposals for modification of the plan. The treatment plan is individualized in two limited respects. First, the plan matches the defendant to the most appropriate of the several patterned bands. Second, there is also some discretion within each band to tailor the plan to the defendant's specific needs and to revise the plan in light of the defendant's experience. And the bands themselves are revised in the light of program-wide experience.180

At the same time that the court is monitoring the defendant, it is monitoring its treatment providers, and the court itself is being monitored by a network of government and nongovernmental organizations.181 Subcontracting with multiple treatment providers allows the court to compare their performances, to encourage learning among contractors, and to sanction or terminate poor performers. The same data can be used to evaluate the court's own overall performance by the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs or the Drug Court Standards Committee of the National

179. Dorf & Sabel, Drug Courts, supra note 4, at 845-49.
180. Id. at 847-50.
181. Id. at 844-46, 862-64.
Association of Drug Court Professionals. Data can be collected and compared on such indicators as program completion rates, recidivism rates, and program cost. These organizations provide technical assistance and facilitate exchange of information among programs.

In principle, transparency is extensive. The defendant must submit to extensive surveillance of his personal life. All data on his course of treatment is available to the judge and team of professionals working with him. For their part, subcontractors and the court must make aggregate data on results and diagnostic information relevant to explaining success or failure. Assessments comparing the performance of the drug courts to more traditional approaches are encouraging. ¹⁸²

Now consider how these programs implicate the background principles of Citizenship, Associative Democracy, and Problem Solving. First, Citizenship. These programs arise from a self-conscious rejection of the Victim Perspective as applied to drug addiction. The Victim Perspective tended to argue against punitive or coercive responses to addiction on the grounds that, first, addiction resulted from social conditions for which the victim should not be blamed, and second, somewhat contradictorily, that effective treatment could not be coercively imposed. The preferred remedy was thus decriminalization coupled with the expansion of voluntary services.

The drug court movement was influenced by recent research suggesting that, in fact, addicts are as likely to respond to coercive as to voluntary treatment, perhaps more likely. ¹⁸³ These studies suggest that repeated relapses are normal, even in successful cases, and that they are minimized by a schedule of certain but graded sanctions and rewards. Although the orientation of these studies is medical rather than political, the approach they prescribe associates autonomy and responsibility in the manner of the Citizenship idea. Drug courts subject the defendant to a potentially infantilizing loss of autonomy, but this deprivation is premised on the conceded fact that through addiction he has lost at least some of the capacity for responsible action. The program involves the defendant in planning for his own treatment. It responds to demonstrations of

¹⁸². Id. at 851 n.50.
¹⁸³. Id. at 842 n.23.
increased responsibility with reduced supervision. At least in principle, the program makes itself accountable to the defendant for providing the services in the negotiated plan.

Second, Associative Democracy. The first of the current drug courts was established in Dade County, Florida, in response to local protests over the harshness and ineffectuality of conventional responses to drug cases.\textsuperscript{184} When the Department of Justice under Janet Reno, who had been Dade County District Attorney when the Florida experiment occurred, sought to encourage such programs, it stipulated as a condition of support that a local team of court personnel, including prosecutors and defense lawyers, be constituted to plan and monitor the project. Many drug courts are community courts with narrow, geographically defined jurisdictions. Such courts encourage community participation through advisory boards, community mediation panels, victim-offender impact panels, and town hall meetings.\textsuperscript{185} Many of the service providers who provide treatment and participate in revision and evaluation of the treatment providers are local nongovernmental organizations.

The Priority of Solutions operates at two levels. At the level of the individual, it broadens the view of what is at stake from an isolated episode of wrongdoing to that of a long-term condition, and emphasizes the possibilities for mutual gain through treatment. At the same time, it treats the negotiated resolution as a starting point to be improved in the course of experience. At the systemic level, the Solutions principle appears in the program’s self-conception, not as a mechanism for resolving discrete disputes or vindicating an established set of entitlements, but as a provisional, revisable approach to a social problem.

\textbf{B. Second Generation Employment Discrimination} \textsuperscript{186}

First generation employment discrimination claims tended to involve allegations of disparate treatment, such as explicit policies or practices directly disadvantaging women or minority groups. The characteristic legal response was a lawsuit for damages for the

\textsuperscript{184} \textit{Id.} at 843-45.


\textsuperscript{186} \textit{See generally} Sturm, supra note 4.
identifiable victims or an injunction forbidding the discriminatory practices. Second generation claims tend to involve allegations of disparate impact, or practices that are not discriminatory on their face but seem to produce effects that consistently disadvantage women or minorities. Salient examples of second generation claims are claims based on subjective hiring and promotion practices and sexual harassment claims that allege a hostile work environment. In both cases, the defendant employer responds that it has merely delegated authority to lower tier decision makers, invariably with instructions not to discriminate. Most often, the employer will claim to have been unaware of any discriminatory acts, and sometimes there will have been no overt acts. The plaintiff’s case consists mainly of a showing that, say, women are disproportionately passed over in hiring and promotion or that they are not comfortable in, or tend to leave, the allegedly hostile environment. The courts have indicated that plaintiffs can establish liability with disparate impact evidence. First generation remedies, however, seem unsatisfactory in this context. The wrongs in question are not susceptible to redress by specific negative injunctions, and damage awards do not directly change the workplace or give the defendant notice about what it must do to avoid further liability.1

Susan Sturm has studied a range of responses to this situation. Some responses have been negotiated in the course of litigation or in anticipation of litigation, and some have been undertaken voluntarily by firms concerned about employee morale and retention. Regardless of how they originate, the responses share characteristics of Pragmatist practice. The structures in question are typically instituted after extensive consultation with rank-and-file employees and are designed to facilitate continued consultation. Management might be able to impose a regime of its own devising; so might the employees if they prevailed in litigation. But both sides concede that they lack the understanding to devise an effective remedy without the other. If the remedy arises from a lawsuit, it is negotiated with employees’ counsel and perhaps with direct participation by some employees. If there is a union, the union will be involved. In addition, informal employee identity groups may sometimes participate. The employer can form a task force with

187. Id. at 484-89.
employee representation or it can invite or solicit employee views through systematic interviewing, telephone hot lines, or grievance procedures.  

Managers are required to state as explicitly as is feasible the criteria for hiring and promotion and, when they deviate from the articulated criteria, to justify the deviation. The structures involve continuous monitoring based on benchmarks, goals, and indicators of various kinds, including data on hiring and promotions by race or gender. Goals are often specified and progress toward the goals is measured and compared with performances of comparable units. As analysis identifies more specific problems, diagnostic indicators are established. Where lack of training is an obstacle to female or minority promotion, the provision of training can be monitored in relation to the relevant category. Promotional data can also be assessed by gender and race relative to a given amount of training.  

In an accounting firm where one barrier to women advancing was their disproportionate failure to get the assignments that led to the most valuable training and contacts, assignments were monitored by gender. Where lengthy out-of-town assignments were identified as a problem for women in balancing work and family, the number and length of such assignments was monitored. Ad hoc grievances can be examined for patterns, and the indicators revised as new patterns are discovered. One company assesses the efficacy of its internal grievance process by comparing complaints made through this process with outside complaints, including lawsuits and complaints to public agencies.  

Transparency is important to these regimes in various ways. Data on benchmarks and indicators is available to managers. If there is a consent decree, it is likely to be available to representatives of the employee class. Even without litigation, it may be shared with employee representatives. Some companies share such data with each other. An important part of some regimes is the provision of information on training and promotion opportunities to employees. At Home Depot, for example, a computer tracks employee interests and training, notifies both employees and

188. Id. at 489-520.  
189. See id. at 546-53.  
190. Id. at 492-99.  
191. Id. at 507.
managers when a relevant job opens up, and sends notices to monitors when ostensibly qualified workers are repeatedly rejected.\footnote{192. Sturm notes that the transparency on which Pragmatist approaches depend is in some tension with current doctrine because tracking such data may make it easier for plaintiffs to establish liability. \textit{Id.} at 476. This counterproductive disincentive could be avoided by either giving some limited or temporary immunity to employers for inculpatory data they generate themselves, or, alternatively, by imposing a duty on all employers to collect such data.}

Note how the second generation approach resonates with the background premises of Legal Pragmatism. The new remedial regime implicates a shift in the understanding of discrimination that parallels the distinction between the Citizen and Victim Perspectives. The old paradigm implied that the plaintiff was a victim because it treated the defendant as a villain and discrimination was seen as conscious and malicious wrongdoing. Research, however, increasingly portrays important forms of discrimination as a consequence of practices that are as likely perpetuated by indifference or ignorance as by intention.\footnote{193. \textit{Id.} at 473.} It also appears that discrimination often arises from basic cognitive practices of categorization and generalization that do not involve malice.\footnote{194. See, e.g., Linda Hamilton Krieger, \textit{The Content of Our Categories: A Cognitive Bias Approach to Discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity}, \textit{47} \textit{STAN. L. REV.} 1161, 1186-88 (1995).} There are thus opportunities for learning through mutual engagement. To the extent that the Victim Perspective excessively moralizes the issues and engenders self-righteousness on the part of the plaintiffs or defensiveness on the part of the defendants, it can be counterproductive.

Second generation regimes always involve gestures toward employee participation, ranging from, at the least ambitious, procedures for individual grievances, to, at the most ambitious, incorporation of employee groups into negotiation and monitoring. In litigation, the class action decrees can institutionalize countervailing power. However, without independent unions, initiatives toward Associative Democracy in the workplace are subject to suspicion about employer domination.

The Problem Solving Perspective appears from two dimensions. One dimension is the recognition of an interest in fair treatment shared by both the firm and employees, as illustrated by the fact
that some of these regimes have been initiated voluntarily in response to management-perceived recruitment and retention problems. The other dimension is the broadening of the framework from a series of episodic conflicts with discrete static solutions to a search for improved structures that contain procedures for learning and self-revision.

V. AMBIGUITIES AND LIMITATIONS

So far, Legal Pragmatism consists of a set of theoretical intuitions and a series of case studies. The intuitions are explicitly tentative and incomplete, and the case studies are necessarily ambiguous. Most of them involve nascent experiments. Even if we treat them as success stories, it remains unclear how far they can be generalized. It is to Pragmatism’s credit that it makes its limitations so explicit by eschewing axiomatic formalism and interpreting its findings modestly and tentatively. Yet both the plausibility of Legal Pragmatism as a general orientation and the capacity to apply it to particular problems are constrained by a series of critical ambiguities.

In particular, there are four especially important concerns about the practical approach suggested by the operating premises of stakeholder negotiation, rolling rule regimes, and transparency. If I focus on the operating premises, it is not because I regard the background premises as less debatable. It is because the operating premises seem the most original but least developed aspect of the Pragmatist contribution.

A. Vagueness About Domain

Legal Pragmatism is sometimes ambiguous as to whether its approach is a complement to Legal Liberalism that is better adapted to some contexts, or rather a global competitor that could occupy the entire field. Deliberative negotiation would seem to have pre-conditions, as the parties have to have some uncertainty about how the matter should be or will be resolved and they have to believe that mutual gain is possible. The parties have to be capable

195. Sturm, supra note 4, at 493.
of deliberation, which means treating each other with respect and remaining open to learning. Clearly, these conditions are not satisfied invariably.

The issue of the productivity of deliberation can arise from two perspectives. First, the weaker party contemplating whether to enter a negotiation has to consider whether she will be worse off than if she takes a more aggressive course. She has to worry that she will signal weakness to the opposing party. Or that the negotiations will weaken her coalition by slowing things down, by raising internally divisive issues, or by depriving them of the possibility of a clear symbolic victory. She has to worry that, because she lacks skills and information, she may be maneuvered into a worse deal than she could get by fighting. For example, some unions are reluctant to participate in labor standards monitoring regimes of the sort the Pragmatists recommend for fear that their involvement will be construed as an endorsement of high-scoring firms. Apparently, they are reluctant to give endorsements because they fear they will make mistakes and because they think they can mobilize workers best with a clear message of militance.

Second, the legislator or policymaker contemplating whether to encourage and support negotiation has to consider whether negotiation will lead to a worse outcome from a public point of view than alternative interventions. One alternative to direct support for negotiation would be a revision or reassignment of rights. We could enhance the rights of the weaker party and then leave it to that party to decide whether to negotiate in her strengthened position. For example, if the problem is employment discrimination, we could ease the plaintiff's burden of proof or make punitive damages automatic. The plaintiff's default position—the net value of her claim discounted for time and the risk of losing—would increase, and so would her bargaining power in any negotiation she decided to enter into. If the problem is non-violent addiction-related crime, we could reduce the penalties for it.

197. See, for example, the critical appraisal of the sort of stakeholder negotiations encouraged by the Negotiated Rulemaking Act, in Mark Seidenfeld, Empowering Stakeholders: Limits on Collaboration as the Basis for Flexible Regulation, 41 WM. & MARY L. REV. 411, 446-58 (2000).
Another alternative intervention would be to strengthen the weaker party directly, say, by transferring resources or organizing assistance. We could deal with discrimination by making it easier to organize unions or respond to the drug addiction problem by increasing the funding for public defenders.

The Pragmatist tends to respond to both the strategic actor and the policymaker by emphasizing the indeterminacy of the situation. There are risks to the strategic actor of negotiating, but there are also potential benefits, and more often than not, it is impossible to reliably assess their relative magnitude in advance of entering into the negotiation. Of course, indeterminacy cuts both ways. It is as much a reason to hold back as to leap forward. The Pragmatist’s presumption in favor of going forward seems to be based on a predisposition to optimism and a belief that the strongest cultural influences on many strategic actors are most likely to bias them against negotiation.

B. Incomplete Sublimation of Distributive Issues

The Pragmatist approach requires the transcending of distributive bargaining. In distributive bargaining, people argue about their current entitlements, about the position they would be in absent agreement, and about the proper division of the savings and costs of disputing that settlement would accomplish.

This kind of bargaining is inimical to Legal Pragmatism. It is quite risky. It can fail because people estimate their default positions incorrectly, because they lock themselves into aggressive strategic postures, or because they want a symbolic or emotional vindication that settlement would not provide. Moreover, distributive bargaining diverts energy and resources from the search for mutually beneficial solutions.198

Yet distributive bargaining would seem hard to avoid. People will not enter into negotiations unless they think they can do better by doing so, and they will not agree to solutions unless they think

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the solutions are better than their default positions. The process depends on each participant having some sense of her default position. Moreover, it will often be in the interests of parties to persuade others that their default positions are worse than they think they are. Thus, distributive bargaining seems inevitable, as well as inimical.

We saw that the Pragmatists look to bootstrapping to mitigate this problem. If the parties can be induced to bracket distributive concerns and focus on common interests, then the creative exploration of alternative responses may loosen their understanding of how their selfish interests fit in the larger structure. This implies a further prerequisite and limitation: the situation must be one in which most stakeholders see the possibility of major collective improvements in which they might share, but in which there is major uncertainty about the relation between their selfish interests and the general interest. This rules out situations in which some major stakeholders are doing as well as they can imagine doing. It also rules out situations where all of the options are fairly familiar and well understood.

The case studies suggest that situations with the right combination of possibility for gain and uncertainty arise with some frequency, but they do not establish that most social disputes or problems involve such situations. Where the prerequisite is not satisfied spontaneously, the very uncertainty that bootstrapping seeks to exploit will limit the ability of policymakers to generate it.

C. The Problem of Interest Representation

Legal Pragmatism has little to say about who has standing to participate in stakeholder negotiations and how the views of different participants are to be weighed in decision making. We could limit standing to people with interests of a minimum size, and we could weigh the views of participants in proportion to some measure of the interests of the people they represent. It is, however, extremely difficult to weigh interests and to assess the claims of putative representatives to speak for a constituency.199

The Pragmatists believe that these difficulties are less troubling for their approach than for others. The function of negotiation for them is not to identify and aggregate interests. It is a search for the common good. The hope is that such a process will produce decisions that non-participants will recognize as good. Failing that, legitimacy depends on showing nonparticipants, not that they were represented in any agency sense, but that their views were considered. For these purposes, weighing interests is neither necessary nor desirable. What is important is that the full range of views in the society are expressed and considered. They should be considered, moreover, not on the basis of the magnitude of the interests the speaker represents, but in terms of their persuasiveness. Thus, we can dispense with complex standing rules in favor of a presumption of inclusion, and with weighing rules, in favor of a consensus standard for decision.

These responses are not entirely satisfactory. There needs to be some limits on inclusion, and consensus will often be impossible. More importantly, even where consensus is reached after good faith, high-quality deliberation, the pre-existing organization of interests will affect the negotiations and the decision. The best organized and financed groups and interests will tend to be better represented and have more chance of influencing the deliberation. Even if we assume they are thoroughly principled deliberators, they will be more articulate, more skilled at negotiation procedure, and better able to document their claims.

Pragmatists recognize this problem and prescribe that the state or nongovernmental organization sector assist underorganized groups and interests. The problem is that that task would seem to require something like the weighing of interests that Legal Pragmatism sought to avoid through deliberation. How can we decide which underorganized groups and interests should be given support and how much support they should be given without some weighing of interests?

200. See MICHELMAN, supra note 35, at 60.
D. The Reversion Danger

In the Legal Liberal perspective, people are most often arguing about what they are entitled to because of what happened in the past. They back up their assertions by interpretations of legal authority and evidence of past conduct. The Legal Pragmatist perspective tries to bypass such issues by focusing on solutions. Deliberating about solutions involves predictions about the future, and the principal way parties back up these assertions is by agreeing to submit to accountability regimes involving performance measurement and rewards and sanctions.

We have seen that uncertainty about how selfish interests will fit in a reformed regime plays a critical role in the initial deliberation. At best, however, this uncertainty operates only *ex ante*. Once the regime is up and running, people's roles will become more defined and their sense of self-interest will be clearer. Of course, Pragmatist regimes aspire to revise themselves continuously, so there is always an element of uncertainty and open possibility about the future. But after the initial round, the accountability mechanisms have to be applied, and this entails some assessment of past performance. Parties will have definite selfish interests with respect to this assessment.

Both the initial round and every subsequent round anticipates the problem of differing interests in assessment by specifying performance measures as much as possible, but these standards have to be provisional. Thus, every occasion for the assessment of performance is also an occasion for the assessment of the standards. Every measurement of performance is at once potentially an indication of good or bad performance or an indication that something is wrong with the measures. Thus, there is the risk that distributive conflict will break out every time the accountability mechanisms are applied. Cooperation under the new regime may develop a solidarity that inhibits opportunism. Although to the extent that Legal Pragmatism depends on solidarity, that represents a further limiting condition that will not be present in many circumstances.
CONCLUSION

The idea of Legal Pragmatism elaborated here captures some distinctive features of recent public interest practice and connects it to the complementary philosophical perspective of Deweyan pragmatism.

Recent practice reflects an increased emphasis on options for joint gain, as opposed to redistribution; on continuous and pervasive participation, as opposed to episodic proceedings controlled by lawyers and judges; and on transparency as an inducement to both compliance with obligation and to learning. Perhaps the most basic theme has been the understanding of law practice as a form of collective learning, as opposed to redistribution or balancing power. This theme resonates strongly with Dewey's idea of participatory democracy. Dewey, however, was vague about the specific forms such participation might take and about the institutional support it would require. Recent practice suggests how his vision might be elaborated.

Nevertheless, there is a risk that my contrast of Legal Pragmatism and the older tendencies I have called Legal Liberalism exaggerates the relevant differences and underestimates the continuing importance of the preoccupations of Legal Liberalism. Legal Liberalism has been centrally preoccupied with imbalances of power and wealth and with background entitlements that determine people's options in the event that negotiation fails. It would be reckless to ignore its warning that the search for collective gain risks coercing the most vulnerable or underappreciating their interests. The most collaborative negotiation will necessarily be influenced by the participants' assumptions about the background rights of the participants, rights Legal Liberals may be better equipped to define and debate than Legal Pragmatists.

Like most ideological and academic debates, the argument may be less a matter of choice between irreconcilable perspectives than a matter of emphasis among partially dissonant but mutually interdependent themes. Whether we view it as an alternative to Legal Liberalism or a complement to it, Legal Pragmatism deserves credit for enriching the discourse and practice of public interest lawyering.