

Toppan Best-set Premedia Limited	
Journal Code: SORE	Proofreader: Elsie
Article No: SORE12106	Delivery date: 14 Oct 2013
Page Extent: 16	

Rethinking moderation in a pragmatist frame

John Holmwood

Abstract: This paper addresses moderation in the context of an immoderate populist politics and claims that social integration requires inculcation in the values of a dominant culture, especially by those perceived as originating from outside the political community. The paper argues, instead, for a deep pluralism and for the idea of multiculturalism as friendship and the means of securing moderation in public debate. In making these arguments, it draws upon the pragmatist approach of John Dewey and the significance of his idea of a 'public' and on the work of Danielle Allen and her idea of political friendship. The paper concludes with the argument that political friendship requires motivation and that this will be secured by an orientation toward social justice.

Keywords: Danielle Allen, John Dewey, friendship, multiculturalism, pragmatism, race, security

The idea of a crisis in democratic politics is a familiar one in the social scientific literature, with a variety of different diagnoses and remedies having been suggested over the decades (De Luca, 1995; Hay, 2007). This is associated with a paradox that the electorate, which, in general terms, is frequently represented as apathetic and less concerned with political questions, is also readily mobilized by a strident and extremist politics that pathologizes some members of the political community in order to mobilize political support. This has been evident over recent years in deportations of Roma in Denmark, Germany, France and Sweden and in the politics of immigration in many other states, including that of Britain, as well as in the rise of Golden Dawn in Greece (Mudde, 2007).

This kind of mobilization occurs alongside the perception that the diversity associated with the multi-ethnic (and multi-faith) populations typical of most contemporary democratic societies is a source of fragmentation, undermining the solidarity and social cohesion that previously underpinned social arrangements (Goodhart, 2013; West, 2013). In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks upon New York and Washington in September 2001, the Madrid train bombings of March 2004, the bombing on the London transport system in July 2005, and the terrorist attacks on Mumbai in November 2008, social cohesion has also

1 come to be seen primarily in terms of security in the context of a plural and
2 potentially divided community. The 'other' (or 'stranger') is increasingly per-
3 ceived as a threat and is frequently oriented to as the source of potential violence
4 against a wider community.

5 The issue, apparently, is not only whether diversity may be too great to
6 sustain solidarity, but also whether some 'diverse others' are people to whom
7 other members of the political community have obligations and, if they do, on
8 what terms. For example, in the liberal political tradition, justice is frequently
9 seen in terms of an 'originating' contract among the members of a political
10 community, which all too easily associates the political community with those
11 with particular historical claims to membership which are set against the claims
12 of 'newcomers' whatever their historical connections to the political community,
13 for example, through colonialism and Empire.¹

14 The extent of populist mobilizations also poses a broader question of the
15 relation between expertise and democratic politics. This is evident across a
16 number of areas of public policy, but has received considerable recent attention
17 in the debates over immigration, where it is argued to be a failure (or unwill-
18 ingness) of elites to engage a wider public in the policies on immigration they
19 have initiated with their presumed consequence of highly segregated commu-
20 nities characterized by different values (Goodhardt, 2013; West, 2013). Indeed,
21 the term 'state-multiculturalism' has been used by David Cameron to capture a
22 supposed political project of policy elites in his speech at the Munich Security
23 Conference of 2011 to describe the 'passive tolerance of recent years' (Cameron,
24 2011). In its place, he argues for the need for a much more active, 'muscular
25 liberalism' that ensures 'that people are educated in elements of a common
26 culture and curriculum' (Cameron, 2011).

27 The current situation, then, appears to be one in which there is a distrust both
28 of politicians and of experts, alongside media promotion of an adversarial party
29 politics and the expression of populist sentiments. While there may be a general
30 view that 'extremism' is a problem, especially 'violent extremism', the perception
31 is that it is a matter to be addressed by action taken by the particular community
32 within which such violence is perceived to be incubated and not also by action
33 by the wider community in *its* relation to the associated discontents that might
34 foster such extremism. The alternative to extremism is not perceived to be
35 'moderation'; that is, understood here in terms of engagement and dialogue
36 across the different groups that make up the political community. Multicultur-
37 alism is perceived to be part of the problem and it is to be replaced by assim-
38 ilation under values of the dominant culture ~~but~~ a more thoroughgoing
39 integration of all groups into a dominant understanding.

40 In fact, the suspicion of 'moderation' is directly connected to a suspicion of
41 'expertise'. This is so because a standard argument has been that the complexity
42 of the issues that beset modern democratic politics are such that expert knowl-
43 edge becomes crucial to good governance. Expertise, on this view, mediates
44 (or moderates) the policy debate, such that good policy can be represented as
'evidence-based'. However, as a number of recent cases have indicated, the

John Holmwood

1 'opinion' of experts can be represented by a particular kind of 'minority' opinion
2 out of touch with popular sentiments. Thus, expert evidence on drugs policy, or
3 on migration and its economic significance, can be discounted on grounds of
4 its electoral unpopularity and, at the same time, represented as 'selective' or
5 'biased' and out of touch with popular sentiments.²

6 All of this is by way of a lengthy preamble to the topic at hand, namely how
7 the tradition of thought associated with American pragmatism might bear upon
8 these issues. I shall suggest that John Dewey's arguments in *The Public and its*
9 *Problems* (1954 [1927]) have particular significance for setting them into context.
10 I shall also draw on the arguments of Danielle Allen in her book, *Talking to*
11 *Strangers* (2004).³ If some of the issues I have introduced bear upon the question
12 of electoral 'majorities' and their obligations towards electoral 'minorities',
13 Allen reminds us that the meaning of 'minority' has shifted to indicate particular
14 ethnic (and other) identities within a political community. The latter is a 'reified'
15 minority status in the sense that, at least, in principle, in the case of electoral
16 minorities, the idea can be entertained that the dynamic of politics renders some
17 members a minority on some occasions and a majority on other occasions. The
18 risk of losing in the future might then be seen as a moderating constraint upon
19 winners in the present, in terms of how they treat their opponents.

20 Allen, however, suggests that there is something to be learned about politics
21 from the situation of black Americans whose status within the American body
22 politic is to be a permanent minority, whose rights had, and have, to be won
23 from a majority whose practices have previously denied them. In this way, she
24 also addresses a matter that is glaringly absent in Dewey's account of the
25 problems of democratic publics, namely their potentially 'racialized' character.⁴
26 In this way, the problem of the minority in a democratic polity is directly
27 connected to a politics of 'othering', where a minority is attributed a group
28 identity that questions its standing as equal members. In this context, Allen talks
29 of the need to cultivate habits of citizenship that express an orientation to others
30 as possible 'political friends'. For her, security is a positive state created out of
31 mutual trust and openness, not a negative condition of fear nursed within
32 bounded communities. However, trust cannot only be a matter of dialogue. It
33 also requires practical expressions, including working together on common
34 projects. This is something that can be characterized as a requirement of *pur-*
35 *posive* political friendship.

36 On this view, the task of preventing violence and extremism, say, does not
37 confront a 'minority' community, poorly integrated into the values of main-
38 stream Britain, but a community in which many of those values are shared. It is
39 precisely the projection of a group identity which has the effect of creating
40 distance and distrust. In this context, disaffected members can become attracted
41 to political radicalism of a separatist (and potentially violent) kind. Similarly,
42 the 'white working class' addressed by the English Defence League, does not
43 express 'majority' English values repudiated by 'minorities'. Some members of a
44 putative 'white working class' might be expressing disaffection at their poverty
and lack of opportunity, but those conditions are not exclusive to them. They

1 are shared with people of South Asian, African-Caribbean and African descent.
2 They are also shared by migrants from other places, including the countries of
3 Eastern and Central Europe, and they have similar origins in neo-liberal policies
4 of de-regulated labour markets and associated de-industrialization.

5 What is at issue is how to understand the political community as being made
6 up of different kinds of interconnections and without difference being under-
7 stood as an obstacle to the development of new connections and wider solidar-
8 ities. In effect, this is also to ask how we might better understand public
9 expressions of identity and their relation to the problems of contemporary
10 democracy? I shall suggest that these questions cannot be addressed outside a
11 broader understanding of the very idea of *the public* as a constituting category of
12 politics.

14 I

15
16 Dewey's *The Public and its Problems* was written in 1927 and represents a
17 philosophical reflection on the nature of modern democracy in the context of the
18 rise of corporate capitalism. Unusually, for a philosophical text concerned with
19 conceptual arguments, Dewey was seeking to challenge standard philosophical
20 theories of the state, whether emanating from liberalism or historicist traditions,
21 arguing that the purpose of his reflections was to establish a better understand-
22 ing of the modern state as an *empirical problem*. Just as publics and states vary
23 with conditions of time and place, so do the concrete functions that should be
24 carried on by states: Dewey argues that 'there is no antecedent universal propo-
25 sitions which can be laid down because of which the functions of a state should
26 be limited or should be expanded. Their scope is something to be critically and
27 experimentally determined' (1954: 74). In other words, there is no principle, or
28 set of principles, on which the modern state should be founded, other than the
29 effective functioning of political institutions in the service of publics.

30 Dewey begins from the argument that the individual is necessarily a social
31 being involved in 'associative life', and that this is true of what are convention-
32 ally regarded as private actions as well as those more conventionally regarded as
33 public in the liberal distinction between the private and the public.⁵ For Dewey,
34 individuals form associations, and they are formed by associations, that is
35 relations of interdependence with others.⁶ At the same time, the multiplicity of
36 associations and their interconnected actions have consequences. Sometimes
37 these consequences can remain relatively self-contained. Sometimes they can be
38 addressed by innovations within the associations in which they occur as prob-
39 lems, and sometimes they call forth external regulation, that is, the formation of
40 new associations and action *upon* existing forms of association. In this way,
41 Dewey places his ideas of politics in the context of the general thrust of his
42 pragmatic philosophy that extols the dynamism of social life, the 'experimental'
43 approach to problem-solving, and the application of 'intelligence' to social
issues (see Kadlec, 2007).

John Holmwood

1 In all of this, Dewey's idea of a 'public', and of the several nature of 'publics',
2 is crucial. It contains a strong idea of democracy associated with participation
3 and dialogue, but does not deny that there will be functionally differentiated
4 publics, whose articulation will be at issue. Equally, his idea of the 'public' does
5 not depend upon an ideal form that acts as a regulatory idea for critique. Dewey
6 wishes to place philosophical (and social scientific) inquiry to work in a messy
7 world of practical politics (an orientation shared by Allen, as we shall see). The
8 key to his definition of a public is contained in the idea of action in the world
9 having effects and consequences that are ramified and impact upon others who
10 are not the initiators of the action. Essentially, all action is associative action,
11 but a public is 'brought' into being in consequence of being indirectly and
12 seriously affected by those actions of others. As Dewey says, 'there are associa-
13 tions which are too narrow and restricted in scope to give rise to a public, just as
14 there are associations too isolated from one another to fall within the same
15 public' (1954: 39).⁷ As we shall see, part of his analysis of the problem of modern
16 democracy is concerned with the imbalance in the development of associations
17 and the proliferation of problems in areas where the public cannot properly
18 defend itself in that isolation may be a problem of representation rather than a
19 reflection of the localization of a particular interest.

20 This is the point at which Dewey shifts gear to argue that the wider idea of a
21 public achieves a level of generality that requires organization and personnel to
22 express it, namely the idea of a state as a congeries of public authorities. Thus,
23 Dewey proposes that:

24
25 [The] lasting, extensive and serious consequences of associated activity bring into
26 existence a public. In itself it is unorganized and formless. By means of officials and
27 their special powers it becomes a state. A public articulated and operating through
28 representative officers is the state; there is no state without a government, but also
29 there is none without the public. (Dewey, 1954: 67)

30
31 Dewey by no means suggests that these developments mean that a state
32 necessarily will act in the public interest – power can be accrued, authority
33 exercised despotically and, indeed, the personnel of government can act on their
34 own private or other special interests. The fundamental point, however, is that
35 the state takes its meaning from the idea of a public and its interests, and that
36 this is conceived as something that is not fixed or given, but can vary with
37 changing circumstances. This means that, for Dewey, not only associations
38 external to the state, but the state, itself, and its modes of organization, are
39 subject to change and revision in the light of other changes in the development
40 of associative life. In other words, although the state exists in relation to the
41 problems of associative, social life that create a public, its forms and modes of
42 organization may come to constitute a problem for the expression of that public,
43 although, paradoxically, that is its *raison d'être*.

44 We can see something of this problem in current politics where governments
45 claim to represent the public in its guise as 'taxpayer', promoting efficiency
and fairness in the spending of 'public money' and addressing the public as

1 'sovereign' in its individuated presence at the ballot box. In this context, it could
2 be argued that the public functions of government could be more efficiently met
3 if they are privatized and serve the individual as a consumer, rather than as a
4 member of a public. Where a government seeks to reduce the public functions of
5 the state by passing them into the market, or by operating them in subordination
6 to a logic of markets, then it is undermining the very substance of a public from
7 which the state derives its meaning. Similarly, the figure of the 'taxpayer' with
8 common interests can also serve for the capture by elite interests keen to reduce
9 *their* tax burden perceived as an imposition of electoral majorities.⁸

10 In identifying the public and its problems in modern society, Dewey has as his
11 target two potential pathologies. The first *is where the state is set against the*
12 *public* and is attributed to liberal individualism and its idea of the minimal state.
13 The appropriate form of the state is provided by attention to the functioning of
14 publics and not by reference to an abstracted and outmoded idea of the indi-
15 vidual. The second is with a consequence of the conditions of modern corporate
16 capitalism in which there appears to be an '*eclipse of the public*' (eclipsed, that is,
17 in terms of its effective expression, not in terms of the conditions giving rise to
18 it), by the powers vested in corporate agents. In both these respects Dewey's
19 argument have a lot in common with those made by Durkheim in his *Profes-*
20 *sional Ethics and Civic Morals* (1957). Each perceives that the state is integral to
21 modern capitalism and has brought into being many of the freedoms associated
22 with it (for example, the freedom from regulation by craft guilds, choice of
23 occupation, etc.).⁹ However, each argues that this arises in terms of an ideology
24 of individualism – of the individual as independent of all associations – that
25 poses the individual against the state (precisely by virtue of the failure to recog-
26 nize that the state itself is derived from the idea of a public). Like Durkheim,
27 but with a different vocabulary, Dewey argues that this sets the state against
28 the public, which, since it arises in associated life and the latter is the ground
29 of the individual, undermines the individual as surely as it seeks to set the
30 individual free.

31 The idea of the individual free of associations is, for Dewey, linked with the
32 idea of the 'naturalness' of economic laws (embodied in market exchanges) and,
33 thus, with the idea that politically made collective decisions are necessarily
34 problematic and should be minimized. In this sense, it is precisely the ideology
35 of liberal individualism, according to Dewey, that suggests that the market can
36 replace the state as the regulator of social life, when it is precisely the conse-
37 quences of market-based association that are in requirement of regulation.
38 From the point of view of liberal individualism, then, modern capitalism has
39 produced an appropriate eclipse of the public, in the sense of rendering the idea
40 of the public nugatory. However, according to Dewey, this doctrine emerged
41 just as the idea of an 'individual' free of associations was being rendered unten-
42 able by the very developments of corporate capitalism with which it was linked.
43 Thus, Dewey says that "the individual," about which the new philosophy
44 centred itself, was in the process of complete submergence in fact at the very time
in which he was being elevated on high in theory' (1954: 95–96). Commenting on

John Holmwood

1 this development, Livingston (1994, 2001) identifies the rise of the corporate
2 economy as the moment of pragmatism. For Dewey, the idea of ‘individualism’
3 was peculiarly well suited to the promotion of the class-based associations of
4 business activities and brought into being the corporate economy that is patently
5 at odds with that individualism.

6 The growth of corporate capitalism and intertwined functions of government
7 is also called by Dewey, in a phrase taken from Graham Wallas (1936 [1914]),
8 the growth of the ‘Great Society’. This term is reminiscent of the ‘Big Society’
9 promoted by the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, as the organizing idea
10 of the reform of the welfare state and fiscal retrenchment. However, the latter is
11 seeking to expand market provision of services alongside the growth of volun-
12 tary activities in civil society. In fact, where the previous New Labour govern-
13 ment sought co-partnerships between the state and the voluntary sector in the
14 delivery of services, a new form of co-partnership between for-profit organiza-
15 tions and the voluntary sector is being promoted. In this way, charitable organi-
16 zations are encouraged to become a shell for the introduction of the market in
17 the provision of services.¹⁰

18 In contrast, Dewey perceives that, while problems of modern democracy are
19 potentially linked to the form of the state, they are also linked to the market as
20 an expression of class-based interests, with the corollary that this has come to
21 determine the form of the state. For Dewey, the public requires protection from
22 dominance by those interests and their ‘capture’ of political institutions. Here we
23 might see a connection between Dewey’s ideas and those of T. H. Marshall a
24 little later. The latter (Marshall, 1950) gives an account of the rise of civil and
25 political rights of citizenship, alongside the rise of market capitalism, but also
26 identifies the requirement of actions to ameliorate class inequality. These Mar-
27 shall associates with the rise of social rights and an emerging conflict between
28 citizenship and social class. Utilizing a liberal conception of the individual,
29 neo-liberal critics of social rights have sought to argue that they have no proper
30 theoretical basis, but the force of Dewey’s argument (and that of Marshall,
31 though the latter does not articulate it explicitly) is that it is the liberal idea of the
32 individual that lacks theoretical and sociological cogency. Here I might also
33 point out the importance of Dewey’s ‘method’, which has begun with a consid-
34 eration of the individual. Thus, while his arguments have parallels with those of
35 Durkheim’s account of the modern state and moral individualism, they are
36 differently grounded and do not risk the hypostasization of the state (which is,
37 indeed, one of the targets of his book alongside the hypostasization of the
38 individual detached from associations).

39 According to Dewey, the Great Society needs to be transformed into a Great
40 Community and it is the latter that is necessary for the proper expression of the
41 public and for democracy. Thus, Dewey writes of democracy that:

42 From the standpoint of the individual, it consists in having a responsible share
43 according to capacity in forming and directing the activities of the groups to which
44 one belongs and in participating according to need in the values which the groups
sustain. From the standpoint of the groups, it demands liberation of the potentialities

1 of members of a group in harmony with the interests and goods which are in common.
2 Since every individual is a member of many groups this specification cannot be
3 fulfilled except when different groups interact flexibly and fully in connections with
4 other groups. (Dewey, 1954: 147)
5

6 Of course, given that Dewey is arguing for the public as the *raison d'être* of
7 the state, his argument for overcoming the 'eclipse of the Public' necessarily has
8 the state as integral to the promotion of the public and does not divide the state
9 and the 'Great Community'. Nor does it imply a uniform idea of the public – the
10 quotation above clearly parses the public as a series of overlapping 'publics'.
11 Allen, for her part, writes, 'democracy is not a static end state that achieves the
12 common good by assuring the same benefits or the same level of benefits to
13 everyone, but rather a political practice by which the diverse negative effects of
14 collective political action, and even of just decisions, can be distributed equally,
15 and constantly redistributed over time, on the basis of consensual actions'
16 (Allen, 2004: 29). Given that the definition of democracy requires that different
17 groups interact 'flexibly and fully', moderation while addressing problems that
18 arise from common life, but have different consequences for individuals and
19 groups is its *modus vivendi*.

20 The final issue I want to address in my discussion of Dewey is whether the
21 complexity attributed to the Great Society and the problems it poses for a
22 democratic public can be answered by the role of 'experts'. Expert 'neutrality'
23 might be thought of as a surrogate term for moderation. Quite apart from the
24 undemocratic implications of the argument, Dewey also challenges it on socio-
25 logical grounds. The operation of economic interests can operate unseen, pre-
26 cisely because of the formal separation of economic and political institutions
27 typical of modern capitalism. Indeed, private property relations provide a pro-
28 tection of economic interests from state intervention and commercial interests a
29 claim against freedom of information. In contrast, the application of expert
30 knowledge must necessarily take place in front of the public.

31 While arguments about the role of experts frequently depend upon the idea
32 that the public is unable to judge complex matters, it remains the case that they
33 will be able to judge the pretensions of experts. Moreover, where expertise is in
34 the service of political or administrative elites it is likely to be vulnerable to
35 populist mobilizations by the very interests that expert opinion is being called
36 upon to moderate. Thus, Dewey writes that:

37
38 [Rule] by an economic class may be disguised from the masses; rule by experts could
39 not be covered up. It could only be made to work only if the intellectuals became the
40 willing tools of big economic interests. Otherwise they would have to ally themselves
41 with the masses, and that implies, once more, a share in government by the latter.
42 (Dewey, 1954: 206)
43

44 The context of Dewey's remarks is various debates about the problems of
45 'mass society', some of which appear distinctly old-fashioned in terms of the
46 expression of fears of the masses (Bramson, 1961). What is prescient is his
concern with the problem of expertise and its relation to wider publics.¹¹ As

John Holmwood

1 expertise is increasingly co-produced, so what seems to be attenuated is the role
2 of the wider public. In a context where risks of concentrated activities – whether
3 of nuclear power production or carbon-hungry economic profit-seeking, to give
4 just two examples – are also seen to be widely (indeed, globally) distributed,
5 those that are affected are displaced from participation in decisions about them.
6 At the same time, the nature of contemporary democracy, as I have suggested,
7 is that wider public opinion can be made to count in elections and are subject to
8 populist influence by advertising and by mass media, precisely as Dewey set out.

9 10 II

11
12 Dewey ends *Public and its Problems* with a discussion of the problem of ‘minorities’
13 in a modern democracy based upon majority voting. He is aware of the way
14 in which the interests of minorities can be overridden, but his defence of gov-
15 ernment by majority depends on the idea that, ‘it never is *merely* majority rule’
16 (Dewey, 1954: 207). He expands further, by reference to, ‘antecedent debates,
17 modifications of views to meet the opinions of minorities, the relative satisfac-
18 tion given the latter by the fact that it has had a chance and that next time it may
19 be successful in becoming a majority’ (Dewey, 1954: 206–207). The problems of
20 government by majority are precisely what animate Allen’s book, *Talking to*
21 *Strangers* (2004). The ‘methods and conditions of debate, discussion and per-
22 suasion’ are, for her, central to understanding contemporary problems of a
23 democratic public, this issue encapsulated specifically by the problem of elec-
24 toral minorities, who ‘must actually be able to trust the majorities on whose
25 opinions democratic policies are based’ (Allen, 2004: xviii). She argues further
26 that:

27
28 [Majority] rule is nonsensical as a principle of fairness unless it is conducted in ways
29 that provide minorities with reasons to be attached to the polity . . . the central
30 challenge for democracy is to develop methods for making majority decisions that,
31 despite their partiality, also somehow incorporate the reasonable interests of those
32 who have voted against those decisions, for otherwise minorities would have no
33 reason to remain members of a democratic polity. (Allen, 2004: xix)

34 Recent social and political theories, such as those of Rawls or Habermas have
35 sought an algorithm, or abstract principle that can be applied and against which
36 decisions can be judged. Whether derived from the ‘original position’ or the idea
37 of an ‘unforced consensus’, that algorithm is given the form of something to
38 which all ‘reasonable’ people could adhere. However, for Allen, developing an
39 argument that is consistent with pragmatist thinking, such approaches seek a
40 solution in principles rather than practices. The principles are abstracted from
41 the very messiness of the world in which solutions to the problems of the public
42 have to be found. There is, as Allen puts it, an ‘unequal distribution of benefits
43 and burdens inevitably produced by political decisions’ (2004: xxi). For Allen,
this has to be addressed in political communities characterized by what might be

1 called deep plural difference, where agreement cannot be presumed. This poses
2 problems that confound the thin algorithm presumed by other liberal solutions.

3 The problem of the public, for Allen, is the need to build practices of trust –
4 habits of ‘political friendship’ – just where experience within a democratic polity
5 seems to generate distrust. Unlike other writers, Allen chooses the most difficult
6 of examples for her thesis, namely problems of race and racism within the
7 modern democratic order. Dewey’s central concern was the problem of class
8 and the domination of business interests and he does not consider the issue of
9 ‘minorities’ who may never have the opportunity to become a majority (that
10 is, who do not represent the ‘mass’ of the ‘great community’). Yet, at the time
11 when Dewey was writing his book, following the ‘Jim Crow’ laws of post-
12 Reconstruction America, social and political institutions, including universities,
13 were segregated along racial lines. ‘Jim Crow’ continued to 1965 and its legacy
14 remains. One of the landmark cases bringing segregated schools to a formal end
15 was that of *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka*, and it is this case that
16 frames Allen’s account.

17 It is not possible in a short space to do justice to the richness and the power
18 of Allen’s discussion, which draws upon the writing of Ralph Ellison and the
19 theme of sacrifice as a metaphor for electoral minorities. The first part of the
20 book is organized around the images of a white mob at the ‘battle of Little Rock’
21 as a black student, 15-year-old Elizabeth Eckford, was escorted to a formerly
22 whites-only high school. Notwithstanding any anxieties and fears she may have,
23 Elizabeth Eckford appears as the calm, still, centre of these images. As Allen
24 presents it, the moment is one of a seismic shift in the habits of citizenship, where
25 practices based upon the domination of one group and the acquiescence of
26 another, begin to break down as a formerly excluded group states their presence
27 as constituent members of the public. The reaction of the dominant group is a
28 response to the challenge to its privileges.

29 Part of Allen’s discussion involves reflection upon an exchange between
30 Ellison and Hannah Arendt, where the latter criticized the NAACP and Eliza-
31 beth Eckford’s parents for involving her, a child, in a political action. Arendt
32 distinguishes between the political and social realms, arguing that school segre-
33 gation is not a ‘political’ matter, since the social realm is one where groups must
34 be allowed to express their identities. Allen, drawing on Ellison, suggests some-
35 thing different, namely that dominance and subordination had been part of the
36 everyday experience of black Americans and that this was something that black
37 children had to learn as a matter of their survival in a segregated world. As
38 Dewey might have put it, associated life among black and white Americans had
39 prepared Elizabeth for her moment. Her stillness was an acquiescent calm in the
40 face of the many threats that would confront her as a black American operating
41 in a segregated social and political world.

42 According to Allen, in criticism of Arendt, Elizabeth Eckford’s parents
43 would have failed in their obligation had they not prepared her for the moment
44 when her presence would be perceived by others as out of place. Politics was
taking place, but it was initiated by those who presented Elizabeth Eckford with

John Holmwood

1 what Anderson (2011) has called a ‘moment of acute disrespect’. At the same
2 time, the hostility of the ‘respectable’ white mob at the perceived threat to their
3 privileges turned that moment into a transformative one. Elizabeth Eckford
4 passed into the public as a constituent member with her own desires and claims.
5 The past sacrifices of those desires and claims, made in the name of a possible
6 future in which they might be met, becomes condensed in the moment when the
7 demand is finally made that now they be realized. Elizabeth Eckford is, thus, a
8 symbol of the sacrifice of all black Americans, not a political actor representing
9 a cause, as Arendt supposes.

10 Political friendship is difficult to construct where relationships have previ-
11 ously expressed domination and subordination. Danielle Allen writes that citi-
12 zenship is expressed in ‘habits’ and modes of conducting politics that are often
13 unreflectively enacted. Their character becomes evident at moments when there
14 is an underlying shift in the structures of power and recognition. For ‘majority’
15 communities, citizenship can frequently express the habits of domination, while
16 for minority communities their habits are of acquiescence.¹²

17 Allen’s example is the United States and its past of slavery, the colour line,
18 and the continuation of, what King and Smith (2005) call, its ‘racial institutional
19 orders’ of work, welfare and politics. In the UK and other European countries,
20 the equivalent context is the past of Empire, colonial domination and, after
21 World War II, adjustment to a postcolonial future in which those whose terri-
22 tories were once subjugated become migrants to, and citizens of, the former
23 colonial power. Their equal membership of the political community was denied
24 in the colonial context and is derogated in the context of migration where
25 acquiescence is expected. The latter is frequently expressed in terms of not being
26 ‘too demanding’, of recognizing their role as ‘newcomers’, of the ‘need to inte-
27 grate’, or of ‘going quietly about one’s business’. It is to be *one of us*, so long as
28 one’s voice is passed into theirs, but always to be at risk of being *not really one*
29 *of us*.¹³ For members of a disadvantaged and discriminated group properly to
30 express its own presence as part of the public, requires it to give up habits of
31 acquiescence. In doing so, however, it bumps against the habits of domination
32 to which it had previously acquiesced and frequently elicits a reaction of puz-
33 zlement, anger and resentment from those who had previously expressed their
34 dominance unconsciously and accepted acquiescence as their right (in their
35 ‘own’ country).

36 Allen wishes to inculcate different habits in our practices of everyday citizen-
37 ship, habits of political friendship. Although we do not want our trust and
38 benevolence to be abused, to be continually alert to its possibility undermines
39 what it is to be a friend. Yet this kind of vigilance about the other, and percep-
40 tion of the potential constraints the other poses for an individual’s exercise of
41 autonomy, is at the heart of the modern liberal idea of self. This does not mean
42 that we have to tolerate all expressions of difference, or that there are aspects of
43 those that we call our friends that we will not find troubling (though we should
44 be sensitive to the fact that we might be a source of trouble and concern for
them), it is to say that what Allen calls the ‘art’ of political friendship consists in

1 constructing possible coalitions of action across other differences. Political
2 friendship differs from other forms of friendship by virtue of its purposive
3 character.

4 Moreover, if Danielle Allen is correct, it is only the construction of political
5 friendship that can prevent extremism, whether racist or violent. Indeed, in the
6 case of the latter, it is unlikely that the attraction of some young people to
7 fundamentalist forms of expression will be effectively countered either by having
8 Imams better educated in the English language and local conditions, or by
9 advocating secularism (as proposed by the Quilliam Foundation), but by
10 showing the possibility of, say, inter-faith activism to address the social injustices
11 they perceive to be peculiar to their own community. For members of the
12 supposed 'majority' community, inter-faith social justice involves the public
13 demonstration that the obligation to do something about preventing violence
14 and extremism is one that is recognized by all communities and is demonstrated
15 in common action upon social injustices affecting all communities.

16 Allen is also making a broader argument about 'electoral majorities' and
17 'minorities'. Democratic politics is about sacrifice, even where the nature of
18 that sacrifice is not recognized within the public. Her argument for 'moderation'
19 – to address the whole of the public and not just those whose vote will
20 secure victory – is an argument that also requires that those whose different
21 interests are being engaged recognize that engagement: 'Speakers need not
22 shed their private interests when they advocate policies, but they must prove
23 that they have in the past been and will again in the future be willing to accept
24 decisions that benefit themselves less than others' (Allen, 2004: 154). The
25 strong implication is that this is a lesson that the advantaged must learn from
26 the disadvantaged, albeit one that they find extraordinarily difficult to learn
27 (after all, her argument about sacrifice is that the burdens of American democracy
28 are carried by black Americans and yet that is unrecognized by white
29 Americans).

30 As Dewey argued, the operation of class interests within capitalism occurs in
31 terms of a principled commitment to liberal individualism and the institution
32 of the market as an alternative to the public.¹⁴ In this way, the fundamental
33 problems of modern democracy and its associated great community are evaded.
34 The thrust of the pragmatist approach that I have derived from Dewey and
35 Allen is that the great community will be characterized by its practices, not
36 principles, and by a recognition of sacrifice in the unfair consequences of associated
37 actions. This would involve recognition that state and market are intertwined
38 in a political economy that is operated as an explicit object of public
39 policy.

40 In the present economic situation of fiscal crisis and budget cuts, part of the
41 public debate involves recognition that this exercise of public policy will create
42 job losses, at the same time as it is argued to be necessary to re-balance the
43 economy. Those who keep their jobs are 'winners' whose good fortune is secured
44 by those who lose theirs and, therefore, make a 'sacrifice' to the benefit of others.
Are they not due our public recognition? Yet, we frequently pathologize the

John Holmwood

1 unemployed, castigate dependence on benefits, and now within our polity we
2 contemplate policies to constrain public spending and decrease the taxes that
3 would otherwise be paid by the beneficiaries of the sacrifice of others. At best,
4 the argument is that the sacrifice should be equal among all groups, but that fails
5 to recognize the inequities of sacrifice in the current arrangements before any
6 new sacrifices are distributed. For example, on the arguments of Allen, it is not
7 right that the poor should bear their (supposedly equal) share, since poverty is
8 an indication that their sacrifice has already been made and their burdens
9 deserve to be lifted.¹⁵ The idea of an equality of a shared burden is already a
10 failure to understand the sacrifices that are bound up in current activities. It is
11 precisely to address the inequities of such sacrifices and in the construction of the
12 political actions ameliorate them that new publics – associations of political
13 friends – are necessary.

14 15 III

16
17 At the start of this chapter, I set out a number of problems in the modern
18 political order associated with problems of trust, solidarity and ~~in~~ the role of
19 expertise. It remains briefly to return to the issue of expertise and the relation of
20 sociology to the practices of public life. In setting out a pragmatist approach to
21 issues of moderation and the nature of democratic politics, as we have seen,
22 Dewey posed the problem of where ‘intellectuals’ might stand. ~~As we have seen,~~
23 ~~he~~ postulated a polarized situation, where they might side either with corporate
24 and government interests, or with the masses, but it is clear that he was uncom-
25 comfortable with that dualism. Howard Becker once famously asked sociologists to
26 take a stance on the question ‘whose side are we on?’ with the implication that
27 the answer could never be that we are ‘neutral’. I suggest that reflection upon the
28 arguments of Dewey and Allen poses a new answer to the question; we can be on
29 the side of ‘publics’ (which emphatically is not the same as being on the side of
30 any government).

31 It is hard to resist Turner’s (2001) conclusion that the problem of expertise is
32 one of the defining problems of modern democracy that besets social and
33 political theory. This is especially so if the mediating role of the public in the
34 relation between state and expertise is ignored. For Dewey, as we have seen,
35 the significance of expert knowledge is how it can facilitate public debate, not
36 government and corporate decision-making independently of the participation
37 of wider publics. The increasingly embedded character of expert knowledge
38 within corporations and government serves to delegitimize expertise precisely
39 by these associations and is part of the ‘eclipse of the public’.¹⁶ As Dewey puts
40 it, ‘the essential need . . . is the improvement of the methods and conditions of
41 debate, discussion and persuasion. That is *the* problem of the public’ (1954: 208).
42 But, as Allen argues, debate, discussion and persuasion must be brought to bear
within publics engaged in purposive actions to redress injustices.

Notes

- 1 The reference to Rawls (1971) is implicit here but, of course, he and his followers have sought to extend the idea of a political community to a series of overlapping political communities, or to posit a 'world political community' (see, for example, Pogge, 2001).
- 2 For example, as illustrated by the sacking in 2009 of UK Government adviser, Professor David Nutt, for expressing the view that some proscribed drugs were less harmful than alcohol; on immigration, see, for example, the 'Migration Watch UK' website (www.migrationwatchuk.co.uk/).
- 3 Allen does not refer to Dewey, but others regard her as part of the pragmatist tradition at the University of Chicago (see Schulz, 2009). Schulz regards this tradition and Allen, in particular, as important influences over President Obama's 'inclusive' rhetorical style in which the whole audience is engaged and not just those inclined to support him.
- 4 Dewey does discuss, albeit briefly, issues of immigration in America, but not the situation of those whose migration was forced in order to benefit 'settlers', who are, by that token, distinguished also from those whose migration is subsequent to settlement.
- 5 It is precisely this that Dewey suggests allows the understanding of the changing definition of the boundaries of what is conventionally regarded as private and public. The conventional definition of the 'private' is that of associated life that does not impinge with wider consequences upon others.
- 6 Dewey's ideas of the individual formed in associative action are grounded in his social psychology set out in his article on 'the reflex arc' concept (1972 [1896]). It is developed further in Mead's idea of the 'social self' (1964 [1913]).
- 7 A private club organized around a local interest – say angling – may be this sort of association, but insofar as angling becomes a broader interest and develops a concern with the condition of rivers, etc., and connects with others then it begins to meet the definition of a public in both of Dewey's senses.
- 8 This is something that exercised neo-liberal public choice theorists in their critique of bureaucratic interests (Niskanen, 1971) and the possible impact of 'distributional coalitions' within electoral politics (Olson, 1982). They wrote at the end point of a long secular decline in the range of income inequalities, which reversed after 1980 to produce dramatic redistribution in favour of the wealthy.
- 9 There are similarities with Polanyi (1944), too. The latter argues that 'while laissez-faire economy was the product of deliberate state action, subsequent restrictions on laissez-faire started in a spontaneous way (Polanyi, 1944: 141). Dewey, for his part, comments that, 'actual economic conditions were thoroughly artificial, in the sense in which the theory condemned the artificial' (1954: 96).
- 10 For example, whereas charities have frequently had a for-profit arm, its purposes have been to act as a trading company returning profits to the charity to use for its charitable purposes. The new form of co-production allows a for-profit company to withdraw profits from the activities of the charity. The blurring of the differences between charities and other forms of activities, including commercial ones, was the topic of a recent lecture by the outgoing Chair of the Charity Commission, Dame Suzi Leather (2012), where she asked whether 'charities will continue to be able to demonstrate that they are fundamentally different from other types of organisations. Will charity continue to mean something special? Sufficiently unique to earn the trust the public places in charities and the privileges they enjoy?'
- 11 Guggenheim and Nowotny (2003) have recently written of a future where experts in science and technology studies (STS) act as mediators between government and the public. They write, 'The STS community would have set up a number of highly competent committees with flexible membership, including scientists and others from outside the STS orbit, in order to guarantee a broad range of expertise grounded, nonetheless, in an STS perspective . . . and [they] would possess the knowledge and communicative skills to gauge the anxieties of the public as much as its as-yet unarticulated desires' (2003: 250).

John Holmwood

- 1 12 I do not use the language of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' precisely because domination is always a
2 form of inclusion; the language of inclusion/exclusion depoliticizes domination.
3 13 This paraphrases a poem by Daljit Nagra, *The Man who would be English!* From *Look! We Have*
4 *Coming to Dover*.
5 14 Bankers, for example, find themselves unable to act against the discipline of the market that
6 requires them to appropriate their bonuses, despite the fact that those bonuses only exist by
7 virtue of public actions taken to maintain the financial system; any idea that they might 'sacrifice'
8 is an outrage against the functioning of the system.
9 15 While the Government claims that its recent budget is 'progressive' with regard to its social
10 impact, the Institute of Fiscal Studies (Browne and Levell, 2010) has shown that the burden falls
11 mainly on the poor and that it is regressive.
12 16 Of course, the fact that academic research in the UK is going to be evaluated in terms of its 'social
13 and economic impact' is part of the process of shaping that research toward established interests,
14 in the name of government concern with the effective use of public funds, but without a proper
15 concept of the 'public' and its interests in knowledge.

16

17

References

18

19

Allen, D. S., (2004), *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v Board of Education*,
Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

20

Anderson, E., (2011), *The Cosmopolitan Canopy: Race and Civility in Everyday Life*, New York:
W.W. Norton.

21

22

Bramson, L., (1961), *The Political Uses of Sociology*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

23

24

Browne, J. and Levell, P., (2010), 'The distributional effect of tax and benefit reforms to be
introduced between June 2010 and April 2014: a revised assessment', Institute of Fiscal Studies
Briefing Note 108, Available at: www.ifs.org.uk/bns/bn108.pdf (accessed 1 May 2013).

25

26

Cameron, D., (2011), 'Speech at the Munich Security Conference', available at: [www.gov.uk/
government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference](http://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference) (accessed 1 May 2013).

27

28

De Luca, T., (1995), *Two Faces of Political Apathy*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

29

30

Dewey, J., (1954 [1927]), *The Public and its Problems*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

31

32

Dewey, J., (1972 [1896]), 'The reflex arc concept in psychology', in J. A. Boydston (ed.), *John Dewey,
The Early Works. Volume 5: 1929. The Quest for Certainty*, 96–109, Carbondale and Edwardsville,
IL: Southern Illinois Press.

33

34

Durkheim, E., (1957), *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

35

36

Goodhardt, D., (2013), *The British Dream: Successes and Failures of Post-war Immigration*, London:
Atlantic Books.

37

38

Guggenheim, M. and Nowotny, H., (2003), 'Joy in repetition makes the future disappear: a critical
assessment of the present state of STS', in J. Bernward and H. Nowotny (eds), *Social Studies of
Science and Technology: Looking Back, Ahead*, 229–258, Dordrecht: Kluwer.

39

40

Hay, C., (2007), *Why We Hate Politics*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

41

42

Kadlec, A., (2007), *Dewey's Critical Pragmatism*, Plymouth: Lexington Books.

43

44

Leather, S., (2012), 'Speech to the Almshouse Association Conference', available at: [www
.charity-commission.gov.uk/about_us/about_the_commission/speeches/suzi_leather_12062012
.aspx](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/about_us/about_the_commission/speeches/suzi_leather_12062012.aspx) (accessed 1 May 2013).

45

46

Livingston, J., (1994), *Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Revolution, 1850–1940*,
Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

47

48

Livingston, J., (2001), *Pragmatism, Feminism and Democracy: Rethinking the Politics of American
History*, New York: Routledge.

49

50

Marshall, T. H., (1950), 'Citizenship and social class', in T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class
and Other Essays*, 1–85, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

51

Rethinking moderation in a pragmatist frame

- 1 Mead, G. H., (1964 [1913]), 'The social self', in A. J. Reck (ed.), *Selected Writings: George Herbert*
- 2 *Mead*, 142–149, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- 3 Mudde, C., (2007), *Popular Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University
- 4 Press.
- 5 Niskanen, W. A., (1971), *Bureaucracy and Representative Government*, Chicago, IL: Aldine-
- 6 Atherton.
- 7 Olson, M., (1982), *The Rise and Decline of Nations*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- 8 Pogge, T. (ed.), (2001), *Global Justice*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- 9 Polanyi, K., (1944), *The Great Transformation*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- 10 Rawls, J., (1971), *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- 11 Schulz, B., (2009), 'Obama's political philosophy: pragmatism, politics and the University of
- 12 Chicago', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 39 (2): 127–173.
- 13 Turner, S., (2001), 'What is the problem with experts?' *Social Studies of Science*, 31 (1): 123–149.
- 14 Wallas, G., (1936 [1914]), *The Great Society: A Psychological Analysis*, London: Macmillan.
- 15 West, E., (2013), *The Diversity Illusion: What We Got Wrong about Immigration and How to Set it*
- 16 *Right*, London: Gibson Square Books.

AUTHOR QUERY FORM

Dear Author,

During the preparation of your manuscript for publication, the questions listed below have arisen. Please attend to these matters and return this form with your proof.

Many thanks for your assistance.

Query References	Query	Remarks
1	*AUTHOR: To match the reference list, should Goodhart, 2013 be changed to Goodhardt, 2013? Please advise	

Note: The query which is preceded by * is added by Toppan Best-set.