

Rejuvenating Citizenship in the Context of Diversity:

Can social movements be of any help?

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Introduction

More than just what states or supra-states such as the EU may claim and stand for in regard to citizenship, citizenship is evidently a political practice, and hence, not a being but becoming -- in the way people identify themselves and one another, use political rights, and ask new rights and deny some decisions made by politicians and states on their behalf. Not surprisingly, citizenship politics has become central in influencing public debates, social and political change, and international relations, the way social movements being formed, even our own personal lives and how they fit into the political community. This has been associated with the increased mobility of people across the world.

The increased and intensified flow of people on the global scale has put together otherwise disparate individuals and communities with different cultural identities in previously constructed social spaces such as nation-states or, as in the case of the EU, a supranational regional polity. That has created several issues among which the challenge to construct a new citizenship system accommodative of diversity within already configured social spaces occupies a primary position. This involves not only making people of such social spaces develop certain attitudes and gain knowledge of how other people in other cultures attach meaning to their social actions but also imaginatively create new models of citizenship

enabling individuals to undertake their social and economic functions as active citizens. No doubt that the latter is a political condition for social coherence to the benefit of both the polity as a whole and citizens as particular individuals. What is *socially* needed is thus a politically constructed system of rights and freedoms that can resolve, if we use C. Wright Mills' terms, *social problems* as well as *individual troubles* within a multicultural social space by increasing capacities of citizens. This involves both a structural reconfiguration of the social space for eliminating discriminatory politico-legal regulations and transformation of social practices, which are disposed to the exclusion of the others present physically but not yet included socially and culturally. This paper addresses the latter issue; namely, the question of how exclusionary social and cultural practices reproduced by current citizenship systems can be subdued to include the unknown and ignored present others into the polity as active citizens.

In what follows, we take up notions of "citizenship", "political community" and "social movements" within the context of diversity. We emphasize that people are moral beings, and for citizens who are members of a political community, their membership articulates their moral values. This means that citizenship refers to sets of traditions, rules and symbols that shape feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of groups of people. In this sense, citizenship is built on and expanded on the basis of affective connection between people. Thus, the presence of people with different moral values in a political community not only results in growing cultural diversity but also creates a practical question in regard to how variously excluded people can be affectively connected with the polity. We suggest that among others social movements by bringing together the recognized citizens and the unknown presents around, over and sometimes against a common cause may provide sites for articulating different moral values and connecting people affectively. In other words, social movements by fusing moral

values of the unknown presents into the daily lives of the established and already included presents can overcome the affective disconnectedness between legal citizens. A conceptualization of social movements along these lines joins in the attempts to make a link between citizenship and the notion of friendship. The concept of friendship has long been considered as an organic part of citizenship; and was elaborated philosophically by Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Mill, and recently Derrida. Such conceptualizations emphasize moral and affective dimensions of citizenship in addition to its politico-legal basis. Therefore our approach to the problems of citizenship in the context of cultural and moral diversity reconstructs social movements, first and foremost, as friendship groupings, and then as political forces for expanding the span of citizenship.

Citizen as a member of a moral community

The concept of citizenship understood commonly as legal membership of a state has become a problematic notion in political discussions. The way the notion of citizenship is conceptualized changes with the emphases being put on different aspects of political, social and economic conditions. Once certain aspects of these conditions are prioritized at the expense of others, the evolving concepts generate a range of different views of citizenship. These views can be separated from one another mainly according to how they consider the major components of citizenship. Among the principal views the ones that focus on such components as “citizenship as identity”, “citizenship as affective connection”, “citizenship as system of rights”, and “citizenship as self-government as well as political and civic participation” are relevant to our present inquiry. These views of citizenship, however they differ from one another, are also connected because all of them aim to understand, describe, and explain to a certain extent by providing answers to questions such as what defines one as

a 'citizen'; Who is a citizen; and what forms of citizenship at different levels can enrich our perception of problematic discussions and interpretations leading to practical projects for rejuvenating citizenship in the midst of diversity? Surely, among the major political philosophers of citizenship, Aristotle was the first one, who influenced much of the understanding and practice of citizen and citizenship not only in his own times but also since then. Thus, our discussion rests primarily on his accounts.

Aristotle defined citizenship as membership of a political community, which involves affective connections among participants with reference to specific qualities and capacities of friendship presupposing that membership. Friendship-like connections make it possible for people to carry out citizenship functions not only for forming citizenship as a real historical political entity but also for bringing into being some type of commonly shared knowledge of justice, respect, ethos of the good and rights in politics. In other words, the citizen can thus be characterized with the exclusive quality or virtues of friendship for making political community and political function in constitutive of ideal of politics. In this conception, citizens are largely defined by their relationship with political community and having affective connection to it. In this sense, it is not incorrect to suggest that Aristotle derived his concept of citizenship through reasoning from the precondition of affective connection among a group of people and concluded it in terms of the same precondition. Thus, following his footsteps, we can pose the following questions: what makes political communities possible in the first place? What tendencies and forces are requisites for political communities that are not only issues of what it takes to achieve and maintain political community but also important for us to know the criteria and dispositions of active citizenship? These questions implicitly posit a difficult relation between citizens and their political community because they draw attention to a tricky question, so to speak; that is, there is no citizen without

citizenship and vice versa. Yet these two are also different for the apparent reason that they have their own independent ontology. So the question turns out to be what quality each side must have in order to have an identity of the two. Indeed, proposing the question of what makes political communities possible is a question as to what is the functionally and universally minimum necessary condition for the constitution of citizenship by citizens. The answer is that political communities exist; and this always presupposes a form of affective bond among citizens. Thus active citizenship requires a continuous production of affective connections among citizens.

To talk about a society is to talk about people who do reproduce and cultivate political, social, cultural and economic relations that are necessary for reproducing and sustaining their common life. In this set up, in becoming aware of one's own self qua citizen, one must find him or her included in and participated in the common life of a political community and its institutions. In other words, political communities and institutions exist prior to citizens and thus provide them with a social basis of citizenship. Individuals as social agents actively involve with their morals and rules, including their traditions and their procedures. Much of characteristics of one's identity in terms of justice, respect, ethos of the good and rights are results of engagement of a political community. The latter are not only exclusive qualities cementing citizens but also practical necessities of active citizenship.

Aristotle sees relationships in a political community as actions toward one another because people are political by their nature and valuable because of division of labor, which is necessary for the production of their material and social life. There are different sorts of citizens in a political community each of whom must provide some goods and services for the rest. What one citizen provides for others must be no more valuable than what they receive--

otherwise; they'll stop providing their own specific goods or services (1261a, p.229). In this context, Aristotle elaborates political community as an affiliated and mutually beneficial network of interdependent people who as citizens share what is requisite for forming and sustaining political community. A political community can be sustained in a variety of ways, including bond created or sustained by reciprocity, care, liking, mores, politics or economic exchange—or some combinations of these. Language, symbols, and artifacts characteristically mediate these bonds.

With the emphasis on the functions and the role of political community, Aristotle recognizes the necessity of mutual action/co-operation/devotion in the service of a good life, for the sake of attaining a perfect and self-sufficing existence. He thus underlines the basic preconditions of moral agency (the virtue or the freedom and rationality of the moral agent) that bestows the good with specification of people's moral duties, responsibilities, rights etc. The basic preconditions of virtue refer to connections among people—the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. The vital premise is that interaction enables people to reproduce political communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit the social fabric on an ongoing basis. A sense of belonging and the concrete experience of being political (and the relationships of trust and tolerance that can be involved) can, it is argued, bring great benefits to people. In other words, citizens cannot wish for the good of community unless there is a bond of politics among them. Bond of politics in turn requires having some kind of reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity among citizens. Thus, it can be said that bond of politics exists as long as there is mutual trust among citizens. In other words, being a citizen is to trust one another and also in relation to the others that come towards or within it. In this context, trust is more essential than anything else in a political community of citizens. The spontaneous emergence of expectation of good from others indicates the intermediation of a

political community at work through the actions of citizens. The quality of relations within a political community in a way underlines the significance of trust as a condition of repeated interactions with fellow citizens. Trust establishes a kind of system of reliance where people find the power and obligation to act for each other intersects (Locke 1988: 4, 54).

At this point, social movements provide a critical ontological foundation for citizenship. Citizenship gains a real historical essence through and within the sphere of activity. By the sphere of activity we mean all aspects of the social that calls out to people to participate in and make a difference. The call may come from the economic aspect where a new project may require some new talents, cause new social problems such as environmental pollution, open up new opportunities, etc. It may come from the cultural. A new movie may interpret a social condition and divide up the social into two or more poles along the pro and con lines. It may also come directly from the political. For example, a referendum may ask the people whether Turkey be a member of the EU. All this examples show that being a citizen is also being called into the sphere of activity that shapes up the common life of citizens. Sometimes those being called may find close connections between their own sentiments, ideas, practices etc. and some others in the community. They thus choose to participate in the processes of the sphere of activity by forming social movements. Therefore, it is highly relevant to consider the concept of citizenship as a milieu for forming social movements rather than holders of legal rights and duties.

Once citizenship is ontologically related to social movements, the latter also appears to be directly linked with the citizenship as it is practiced. Social movements emerge as both “offensive” and “defensive” forces that aim at expanding autonomy within civil society vis-à-vis the state and its domineering organizations (Arato, 1992). As offensive forces, social

movements devise methods of problem definitions and possible solution strategies that are systematically underemphasized within the formal political system. Social movements act upon information flowing in the sphere of activity, interpret it, and produce knowledge from a normative point of view. The knowledge they produce furnishes a value basis for action and mobilization in an offensive manner against the *status quo*. As defensive forces, social movements tend to aim to establish barriers to ensure the preservation of the lifeworld. In other words, social movements appear to be attempts to re-appropriate personal and local lifestyles within a struggle against “the technocratic apparatus of the state” (Touraine, 1981). By doing so, they obliterate citizenship as an abstract status, as a contractual matter of legal rights and duties, i.e. citizenship as a matter of technical categories. They thus open the way for the materialization of “moral” citizens who participate in an ongoing process of democratic talk, deliberation, judgment and action with other members of the political community.

Touraine’s views may shed further light on the connection of moral transformation of technical citizens through and via social movements. Touraine considers social movements as institutional innovators that are driven into action by moral motives from without the established sociopolitical environment. Touraine problematizes social movements around the concept of social conflict, and sees them as distinctly different from political parties with established ideologies and programs. Touraine introduces the concepts of action and historicity as central axes of the analysis of social movements. He defines action as “...the behavior of an actor guided by cultural orientations and set within social relations defined by an unequal connection with the social control of these orientations” (Touraine, 1981, p. 61). With reference to this framework, Touraine accords actors a capacity to resist structured social relations, and argues that by getting involved in a collective action individuals can

effectively transform social relationships and come up with a novel understanding of their condition of social existence. The latter is associated with a major change in actors' self-consciousness resulting in the formation of an identity in opposition to a well-defined adversary in the given social context. The notion of historicity refers to that particular action taken by self-conscious actors in order to bring about an intentional change in the current social context. In this sense, historicity involves inventing novel norms, institutions and practices resulting in the transformation of social relations.

Similar arguments to support these claims can also be found in Habermas, who discusses social movements in terms of the role of their participants as communicative actors placing issues on the political agenda and determining what direction the lines of communication take within the political system (Habermas, 1996). With reference to Cobb, Ross and Ross, he argues that social movements can be seen as agenda builders outside the government structure and formal political system. As such, they compel a formal consideration of the issues that they articulate in the form of a grievance and try to expand interest in the issues throughout the public sphere and create pressure on policy makers.

All this allows us to argue that by displaying their case to the present others and critically assessing a point of debate, clash, conflict and so on so forth in the sphere of activity social movements endorse a dialogical position. In this context, social movements appear to be party to two types of communicative relations. The first relationship is between the political authority and the citizens, centering around the concern to influence. The second relationship is within the citizens, i.e. within the sphere of activity within which members are located with a particular subjective and moral point of view, entailing a dialogical process leading to the formation of novel social, cultural and political bonds. It should be noted that social

movement members as citizens are doubly involved in this dialogical process: first as *addressors* of concerns, issues and problems, i.e. authors who mark problem situations through actions for which they assume responsibility, and second as *subjects* already located in a common political community. As subjects they have come to feel that they have separate interests and desires and hence they do not completely feel affectionately connected with the rest of the political community, which helps them demarcate the line that disconnects them from the rest. In the case of an environmental movement, for example, the line that disconnects members from the rest can initially be the region under risk from pollution where the members feel they had been living together and sharing the same resources, same meanings, ideas and norms. This feeling can be real to them to the extent that it facilitates an affectionate connection among them as: “We the people of such and such region, city, town and etc.” But as time passes, and as the members get engaged in mass action outside their close circles, the reference of the feeling of “we the people of such and such place” may considerably be enlarged to include first the people who live in the political community at large and share the riches of their place as “public goods”, second almost everybody in the world to the extent that those persons are genuinely concerned about the natural environment perceived simply as the earth on which humanity lives and shares its resources. It is this growth of the feeling of solidarity and affectionate connection and of being co-occupants and co-owners of their places with the people framed as citizens and humanity that can give the movement its innovativeness as the constructor of a friendship among the citizens with common norms, values, interests and demands, i.e. a new historicity. In this sense, apart from fostering democratic and moral citizenship in opposition to “technical citizenship”, social movements introduce a dialogical process of problem identification and solution strategies to the political community. This position, just like a friendship relation, acknowledges equal mutual respect among differing sides to issues of public concern, a reciprocal willingness to

listen to other views and question one's own views in the light of these. Therefore, it helps form an affective as well as reasoned situation in which everybody can take part and where the process cannot be closed with respect to predetermined views, understandings and credentials or qualifications. Such a situation provides citizens with a multiplicity of ways of seeing and exploring problems. The multiplicity of perspectives in turn renders problematic the idea of citizenship as just holders of legal rights and duties.

Final Remarks

In brief, social movements can be considered as forces providing the political community with a bond of politics by mobilizing solidarity among citizens and hence instilling them with mutual trust. In other words, they transform the sphere of activity of a given citizenship context in a particular time and space, in the sense Habermas conceives of it (Habermas, 1989, pp. 231-235 and Calhoun, 1992). What we can suggest is that social movements allow some excluded/ignored/unnoticed citizens to participate in political action in a manner not imaginable in terms of the structural characteristics of the politico-technical structures of legal citizenship -- i.e. the system that sees the citizens just as holders of a legal status and/or being taxpayers or voters and expects them not to get involved in the affairs of the formal political system. This comes about because in the overlapping activity areas in which movement members participate, they interact freely with several individuals and groups from within and without their political community and thereby reconstruct both their own identity and that of their close circles, and to a certain extent their political community. If this reconstruction develops in the sphere of activity, nevertheless, it shall be initiated in the private sphere, in primary circles like the family and immediate friends.

Interestingly, once citizenship is reconstructed by civic action establishing an affective and friendship-like connection with the rest it will have a significant impact on the structured

social relations between family members, friends and work partners, bringing up completely novel norms, values and ideas about the meanings of socially constructed categories such as man/woman, wife/husband, native/immigrant or father/mother. Mostly it is those in the dominant position such as men, natives, majority, politicians, rich, who will find themselves in a situation to change their attitudes, manners and thoughts. As a result of the transformation of the sphere of activity, the dominants may feel the need to revise their perceptions of superiority in the family and the public, and to move towards more egalitarian relations with their friend-like fellow citizens.

Sure enough, that is not the only quality of social movements that can positively make a contribution to the materialization of an active citizenship since there is a plurality of other qualities that can be found in social movements. Particularly in relation to citizenship, social movements approve, first, the intrinsic importance of equality and freedom in human life and their being at the center of any social movement formation, even if these may be exclusively reserved for the members at the expense of others; second, the instrumental importance of political incentives in keeping political system responsible and accountable and again their being among the primary motives of social movement formation; and third, the constructive role of citizenship in the formation of solidarity and in the understanding of needs, rights, and duties and these being the preconditions of social movement formations in open democratic societies. Finally, besides these qualities, social movements are culturally constructed microcosms raising issues with the institutionalized citizenship practices that threaten to block the equality needed for the political and social construction of a democratic political community.

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