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Democracy and Citizenship: expanding domains

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Chapter 22 in John Dryzek, Bonnie Honig and Anne Phillips (eds), Oxford Handbook of Political Theory (Oxford University Press 2006)

Contemporary political theory includes lively debates about the meaning and scope of both democracy and citizenship. To survey and comment on some key recent threads in the arguments, I adopt the frame of ‘expanding domains’ and link the two concepts together, to ask: what impact might different innovations in democratic thinking have on our conception of citizenship? I will explore key ways in which elements of contemporary innovative conceptions of democracy – deliberative, ‘difference’, cosmopolitan, ecological and others - seek to reconstruct and reconstrue citizens and citizenship (and often disagree with each other in the process, within and across these categories of innovation). I shall do this, first, by pinpointing some key ways in which these innovations – openly or implicitly - seek to reconfigure citizenship along three key dimensions, and secondly, by showing how expanding our thinking about a third core political concept – representation – is crucial in efforts to respond to the expanded domains of citizenship and democracy. New ideas about citizenship as they impact on democracy could be taken as the driving force, too - I do not mean to imply that citizenship is always the passive, and democracy the active, concept.

Specifically, I shall ask of the innovative approaches to democracy:

1. Where does democracy find or see its citizens?

It is common, when discussing citizenship, to ask about its ‘extent’, who is included and who excluded¹. My first question encompasses a concern with extent but seeks to go beyond it. Theorists and others find or locate citizens within states or other territorial communities – broader ‘arenas’ if you like. But they also find or see citizens acting out their citizenship in specific other sorts of locale too, be they physical or functional. Some actions in some places are understood as citizen actions, even defining of citizenly action; differences about what those places and actions are take us to the heart of key debates around democracy and citizenship today. And if ‘citizens’ are to be found in places and actions other than geographical, electoral constituencies, how are citizen interests to be represented?

2. How does it construct or construe them?

¹ See Isin and Turner (2002). Their account of the ‘three fundamental axes of citizenship’ – extent, content, and depth – overlaps in various ways with my three questions. More generally, in addition to the Handbook’s editors, the author would like to thank Mark Bevir, Andrew Dobson, Raia Prokhovnik and Judith Squires for helpful comments on previous drafts.

Discussions of both democracy and citizenship regularly take as unproblematic the identities of constituents and citizens. However, a key thread in recent theory has been the unstable and uncertain process of construction of identities and subject roles in both democracy and citizenship. Citizens are made not born, and how they are made, what casts are used to mould them in obvious and non-obvious ways, ought not to be overlooked. Hence the construction and construal of citizens, the forging of (and the failure to forge?) citizen identities appropriate to different conceptions of democracy, and the need to expand our thinking about representation into the neglected domain of the depiction, portrayal and construction of identities.

3. What does it expect or demand of them?

Expectations on democratic citizens depend on how those citizens are understood, in terms of their inclinations, identities and capacities or competences. Often expectations, or at least hopes, centre around mutual recognition and respect around certain civil, political and social rights, and the obligations to act in certain ways that come with those rights and their protection. Democratic innovations seek to extend the domains of expectations in some revived, and some imaginatively new, directions, challenging in their wake narrow conceptions of what it means to represent citizens in democracy.

In the paper's first section I shall ask these three questions of several partial conceptions of democracy – liberal representative, deliberative, difference, cosmopolitan, ecological, direct and associative. Sometimes these views of citizenship flow explicitly from work within these democratic innovations. I will not cover a set number of innovations under each question, and nor do I wish to suggest that these form coherent, complete bodies of thought (far from it, contestation is great within as well as across the set). At other times, I consider what these innovations might most plausibly say, given other things they say.

Democratic innovations and citizenship

1. Where does democracy find its citizens?

Growing haphazardly and with multiple national variations out of the American and French revolutions, democracy came to be practiced in (and only *practicable*) a territorial entity with definite borders wrapped around a people who constituted a nation. The primary democratic mechanism was formal political representation based on elections, in the context of liberal constitutionalism and the rule of law. Democracy, in this conception, found (and finds) its citizens inside those legal and physical borders. Citizens are nationals, members of that nation.

A common, 'thin' conception of citizenship might stop the discussion right there. Formal or legal inclusion within, or expulsion from, the nation-state defines where citizens are to be 'found', and further differentiation is undesirable and unnecessary. According to this view, you are equally a citizen whatever your religion, cultural and ethnic background, 'race', class and so on; these particularities of your identity do not impinge on your citizenship status, which is universal for members.

On this conception, citizenship as basic membership of the nation-state carries rights to freedom, redress, and political participation. These rights have often been won through bloody struggle by members of groups excluded partially or fully from citizenship status – working men, then women – in many countries. Such struggle for rights (or some other forms of recognition), or one or other notion of full inclusion or citizenship, continues in varied and contested domains, as we shall see – the struggles sometimes invoke the inner logic of the thin model, and sometimes explicitly oppose it for supposedly inbuilt limitations. How citizenship rights are understood varies from one democratic country to another, of course. Nonetheless, contemporary democratic systems are largely liberal democratic ones, where liberal conceptions of rights and freedoms underpin a broader notion of individuals pursuing their interests or happiness unimpeded.

However, within this universalist liberal conception, there are more specific spaces in which citizens are to be found – or more accurately where citizenly actions are to be seen. In recent decades in countries like the UK and the US, sponsorship of citizen-consumer approaches has risen in prominence on the back of the systematic introduction of market principles into the organisation and delivery of public services. In this respect, one could say that hospitals and schools and other domains where ‘choice’ has been promoted have often come to be *presented as* sites of citizen activity. Arguably, though, the key specific space deriving from the liberal conception is the polling booth – citizens as individuals in paradigmatic moments exercising their rights to pursue their interests by making choices about their rulers in privacy.

Liberal and liberal democratic traditions are not uniform. Nonetheless, they largely buy into this universalist approach to citizenship with few additional ‘places’ to find or see citizenly acts other than the polling booth (workplaces, the home, and even the streets – apart from a measured amount of peaceful and lawful protest – are by and large not seen as ‘political’ spaces, or at least it is not always desirable that they be treated as such by citizens). But this conception is challenged. In a nutshell: various innovative new democratic approaches press us to ask whether we should recognise citizen actions as valid and even desirable in varied other spaces too: in private as well as in public spaces and activities; outside the borders as well as in them; in the intensity of activity rather than specified activities; or even beyond the boundaries of the category of ‘people’.

Deliberative democrats, for example, wish to add another layer of where citizens are found – namely in *forums*. According to the deliberative idea citizens come together in forums to do those things that are most citizenly, and which are most intensely connected to the heart of democracy – talk, dialogue, reasoning together, becoming informed together and making decisions that reflect more than narrow self-interest and non-deliberative preferences (Bohman and Rehg 1997; Fishkin 1997; Dryzek 2000). The forum is a place-metaphor for clubs, parties, homes, associations, workplaces, special media locations and events, in public demonstrations, and so on, each and all of which expand the domains in which citizens are found, and citizen actions (it is hoped, by advocates) occur. The contrast with the polling-booth-and-little-more liberal conception is drawn (a little too) starkly, but nevertheless the point is clear and accurate enough. A good deal of deliberative thinking is influenced by strands of republican thinking about citizenship and public life; open and equal

deliberation over public matters, in public, resonates with republican themes of the virtue of active citizen participation in community affairs (Pettit 2002). Deliberative forums can be of different kinds – from familiar liberal democratic ones like parliaments to unfamiliar ones with democratic potential such as spontaneous local citizen groups and specially designed randomly-selected groups. When and where people deliberate, ideally they exhibit citizenly virtues of participation, tolerance, recognition of others, and so on. The paradigmatic liberal democratic activity of voting does not carry the promise of such virtue-fostering capacity.

‘Deliberative democracy’ covers a multitude of variants, however. In terms of where citizens are found or seen, consider in particular the quite restricted overall picture that emerges from a broad survey of the the range of forums noted in the deliberative democracy literature:

Table 1: A typology of deliberative forums

<i>Deliberative forum</i>	<i>Formal</i>	<i>Informal</i>
<i>Representative</i>	A Parliament and linked institutions such as Select Committees; deliberative opinion polls linked to referendums or initiatives?	B Deliberative opinion polls which are not state-sponsored; citizens’ juries; some ‘focus groups’
<i>Non-representative</i>	C Supreme or High courts with constitution-interpreting functions; cabinets in appointive systems (e.g. US)	D Associations (state-sponsored or otherwise); political parties (state-funded or otherwise, especially in multi-party systems); ‘protected enclaves’; ‘subaltern counterpublics’; ‘discursive designs’

From table 22.1, we can see that most deliberative forums do not involve citizens directly; and that the ones that *do* generally lack decisional power and broader democratic legitimacy. We might hope that our elected politicians, and judges, will be good citizens. But across the range of forums considered in table 1, it is the informal spaces and groups, which can embrace the widest array of citizens and citizenly action. Yet these are relatively marginal in our political systems – not part of conventional representative structures, and therefore lacking in conventional democratic legitimacy, as well as being detached from formal decisional processes. In sum, deliberationists extend the domains of where we might find or see citizens and citizenly acts. They offer a highly varied picture of deliberation’s scope and potential, but we can say that often the domains where they see deliberation being promoted and extended are marginal ones, outside or on the edge of formal political

structures and involving at best localised claims to representative legitimacy. The extent of the challenge posed to liberal conceptions is varied but overall rather limited. Note, though, that the problem here may lie in a limited conception of ‘representation’, an issue I return to below.

So-called difference democrats have offered critiques of the limited range of forums concerned. Certainly difference democrats like Iris Young (2000) have been keen to promote societies as a single forum or a series of forums in which subordinated voices can speak of their aspirations and experiences alongside dominant groups – and with it a notion of citizenship which emphasises radical dialogical engagement and inclusion. We might say that one thread of deliberative thinking in recent democratic theory has been Rawlsian – a limited range of more or less circumscribed forums whose goal is achieving commonality of citizen action and outlook (Rawls 1997)² – and another has been radical, stressing the importance of less circumscribed or controlled sites of deliberation and contestation (and these as paradigmatic spaces, or potential spaces, for the enactment of citizenship)³. Difference democrats do not only stress the public sphere as vital to citizen action; they stress in particular the irreducibly plural character of that sphere, and of the deliberation that may occur between and across different groups with different perspectives (Young 2000). Other influential threads stress the importance of conventional representative legislatures achieving a level of descriptive representation, in line with a ‘politics of presence’ which is not unduly subsumed under a ‘politics of ideas’ (Phillips 1995).

The supposedly neutral ‘individual’ and ‘citizen’ in the standard liberal conception is modelled on the idealised vision of the white male in western societies and how he has been understood – independent, cultured, possessed of clear interests and inclined to pursue them (Pateman 1987). From the earlier roots of difference-based critiques in feminist theory, we can pick up further extensions of the sites or domains of democratic citizenship, many of which are based in the critique of the gendered and ‘disembodied’ character of the supposedly universal liberal model (Lister 2002) – for example, according to some feminist critics citizens can be found in the home and the local neighbourhood, and in the school and the supermarket, as well as other formal and informal public spaces. Amongst such critics there is disagreement about whether to press for the extension of ‘citizenship’ into caring relationships in the house, for example, or whether this might militate against a strong feminist conception of citizenship that must be based on active public participation (see Deitz 1987; Lister 2002).

Double-edged though it may be, these moves helped conceptions of citizenship to embrace many women, whose traditional roles often rendered them less visible in terms of gendered dominant conceptions of citizenship. This involves a double agenda – first, granting full legal status and access to citizenship rights to women, second to address issues of substantive gender inequalities by recognising the domestic and private spheres as sites of citizenship practices (as additional places where citizens are to be ‘found’). Feminist criticisms of the public-private dichotomy in mainstream liberal (and liberal-democratic) thinking have been important here; a

² There is much scope to question whether Rawls’s later writings add up to a conception of democracy that is deliberative in any substantial sense. See discussions in Dryzek (2000) and Saward (2002).

³ An elaboration of the circumscribed/uncircumscribed distinction can be found in Saward (2001). See Benhabib (1996) for discussion of varied kinds of deliberative democracy.

range of civil society sites and institutions outside the state can be regarded as ‘public’ or ‘private’ (Pateman 1987), a fact that occasions contestation over the range of sites that might be regarded as locales of citizenly action.

Without ironing out artificially internal differences, ‘difference democrats’ lead us to the view that democracy can find its citizens deep in civil society and the domestic sphere, as well as in the public sphere of the workplace and politics. Advocates of associative democracy (Hirst 1994) offer a more functional version of this view. Associative democrats would find (active, empowered) citizens interacting in and through groups at local community level. There is less emphasis here on issues of appropriate forms of deliberative discussion, or of gender inequalities, and more emphasis on citizens making genuine choices through local associations. Although the associative view taps more into territorial decentralisation of policy and service delivery, it overlaps with concerns with ‘difference’ to the extent that localities for citizen engagement and participation are conceived as plural and differentiated depending on local needs and circumstances.

Deliberative and difference critiques press democrats to see citizens as formal members of the nation-state – to be sure – but to go beyond that level to find them in a range of forums, outside the conventional public sphere, outside traditional ‘male spaces’, partly by a radical, pluralizing rethinking of those very spaces and what they can be for citizens. In part this critique shows the elasticity of ‘citizenship’ as a concept – there can be dry and formal and more intensive and less formal sites and spaces where democratic citizens might be found.

The more radical deliberative, ‘difference’ and associative theorists force us to rethink where citizens and citizen actions are to be found. But there remain major boundaries which, by and large, they do not cross – those of nation-state and species, respectively. Let’s consider these in turn briefly.

Democratic theory, like other realms of political theory, has had basic assumptions challenged by variants of the globalisation thesis over the past 20 years or so. There are sceptics and optimists of varied stripes in these debates. One strand has traced the early development of the idea and potential for ‘post-national’ citizenship (Sassen 2002). Many cosmopolitans are keen to extend citizenship, in some sense, to supra-national levels – regional or global or both. If international manufacturing processes and CO2 emissions, the deeply imbalanced terms of global trade, and the scourges of war and terrorism cannot be contained within or dealt with by single states acting alone, then we need democratic structures at these supra-statal levels. If democracy goes global – which, some argue, it has the potential to do - it could develop in various ways out of the more or less incremental development of supra-national and cross-national regulatory regimes and mechanisms. However its development is understood, surely (the argument goes) democratic citizens cannot be rightly regarded as being found just within territorial states. From this perspective, people in other countries can be seen as my fellow citizens; for example, though we live in (or in an increasing minority of cases are caught between) different countries, new overarching political structures could make us common, citizenly, members. That statement rolls together radically different propositions of course – from the state-model-transposition of David Held (1995) to the proposition that democratisation requires radical discursive and cross-border action outside all state structures (Dryzek 2000).

But at one level such visions unite around the idea that theorists, on the one hand, and we all as citizens on the other, can and should find citizens with whom we share communities of fate which transcend simple territorial borders. Why are not those in distant places who die from weapons that our taxes buy *our* obligation, our citizenly brothers and sisters? I might have citizenly regard for non-compatriots with whom I share (say) an ecological community-of-fate.

Where does or can democracy find its citizens? The answers are increasingly differentiated and contested. But current democratic thinking is challenging and extending the location and type of domain concerned. Traditionally and more formally, liberal democracies (and other systems) find and see citizens within nation-state borders, and within that more often in 'public' than in 'private', more in the voting booth than the forum. Innovative democratic challengers find them in additional places. Deliberative and difference democrats find citizens in forums, some in varied spaces of civil society and in the traditional private sphere as well as the state; cosmopolitans among others tempt us to find them well beyond our national boundaries too.

How does democracy construct or construe its citizens?

The universal conception of citizenship construes citizen identity, broadly speaking, in certain ways. First, it is seen as disembodied, in the sense that it is one's rational and abstract capacities that count, not ones' body or gender or desires. According to critics, this characteristic commonly leads to the universal conception overlooking the importance of gender and sexual differences (Phillips 1991). Secondly, it sees citizenship and citizens as disembedded, in the sense that citizen identity owes little to particular context (other than a national one in formal terms). Critics allege that this focus can lead to an unwarranted disregard for the importance of cultural context in shaping identity. And thirdly, the focus of the universalistic model in a view of individuals as autonomous and 'whole' can lead to our overlooking the importance of group identity to both individual identity and experiences of partial or total exclusion.

Political actors, not least 'citizens', do not come to the arena with pre-given and complete identities. Nor do they leave it with newly minted and essential identities. Liberal political theory, notably in the social contract tradition, powerfully suggests and perpetuates a view of individual citizens as in some sense formed prior to and outside of society, rather than bearers of identity that are relational and communal. A range of critics suggest that we need to see citizenship and identity as more made than given, partial than whole, changeable rather than fixed. In this domain, for example, post-structuralist approaches to citizenship, such as that of Mouffe, have been influential in recent years. Such approaches suggest that citizen identities, like all identities, are always contingent and subject to change and reconstruction. As Mouffe writes, 'the social agent [is] constituted by an ensemble of "subject positions" that can never be totally fixed in a closed system of differences, constructed by a diversity of discourses among which there is no necessary relation, but rather a constant movement of overdetermination and displacement' (1993: 77).

So deeply entrenched is the idea of self-seeking individualism and rights as the core depiction of the modern citizen that innovative new democratic models and

approaches offer partial constructions of citizens and their potentialities which build on rather than provide alternatives to liberal democratic orthodoxy. Many do, however, shift the emphasis with respect to potentialities by shifting from citizens as the recipients of government decisions that are made in their name, to citizens as the direct makers of decisions – or at least direct participants in the process of their making. As a part of so doing, such writers frame questions about citizen competences and capacities in ways which, for example, stress moral agency of engaged citizenship rather than technical measures of citizen knowledge (see for instance Smiley 1999). Deliberative, direct and associative democrats variously look to the design of democratic mechanisms through which under-used and under-appreciated decision-making capacities of citizens might be channelled and exploited. So we have referendums and citizens initiatives and recalls and so on with respect to direct democracy; deliberative forums, sometimes for citizen participants and at other times for citizens as enlightened audiences; and radical budgetary decentralisation and participative serve-delivery through diverse associations for associative democrats (Budge 1996; Smith 2000; Fishkin and Luskin 2000; Hirst 1994). Lying just behind such mechanisms and assumptions is a view of a particular citizen capability to reach beyond one's own narrower interests to recognise and even to encapsulate the interests of a variety of other individuals and groups, including perhaps noncompatriot and even non-species ones. To capture some of these reconstructions and reconstructions of citizen identities in a blunt manner: deliberative and other democrats see citizens as talkers and reasoners as well as calculators and choosers. Cosmopolitans, in addition to seeing empathetic capacities extended to non-national others, catch a sense of enhanced reasoning capacities, as do even more radically in some ways ecological democrats. The citizen here is construed as more than capable of achieving an 'enlarged mentality' which enables consideration and empathy with (perhaps radically different) others.

To construe the essence of citizen capacity or character in individualistic and independent, or communal and situated, or moral and empathetic, is to take factual and normative cases about characteristics and to mould, theoretically, an image of what the citizen really is or can be in terms of identity. 'Difference' democrats, in a style that works with the grain of the poststructuralist view mentioned above, seek to resist the easy or hasty assertion of common points of identity among compatriots (or other significant groups). Such efforts at 'objectivity' run up against the inevitable particularity of our judgements of self and others, and the specificity of issues and problems that politics and citizens need to deal with (Young 2000, 113). Situated, differentiated, perspectives are what is brought to public deliberation; 'speaking across difference' rather than to put difference aside or eliminate it, is a primary goal. Citizens may be members of states but they are culturally embedded in more particular ways. They may share outlooks and assumptions but they may also be deluded into over-emphasising commonalities when class, gender, religious and other perspectives differ so much and have such implications for empowerment and disempowerment. From this point of view, liberal citizenship – along with deliberative or cosmopolitan or other variants which argue for the essential and common character of specified citizen identities, competences or desires - is in tension with the notion of an irreducible plurality of other identities and identifications, chosen or otherwise. From poststructuralist and 'difference' points of view, a more mature and realistic conception of citizenship would be one which

allows for, and indeed embraces, the contingencies and multiplicities of identity and identification in complex contemporary societies.

At the most radical end of these debates we can find assertions of continuity between human and non-human 'identities', rather than the more characteristic sharp differentiations. Can citizen identities spill beyond the boundaries of the human? Can, for example, the fox family that lives part-time in my inner suburban back yard consist, in some sense, of my fellow citizens? Are they worthy objects of my regard (and how do they regard me?), do I share a community of fate with them, can the places and spaces they move in and claim be spaces and places of citizen action and regard in some transformed sense? The issues here are ones of boundaries of competence and communicative capacity for citizenship. However, they also hark back to the previous section on where citizens might be found: animals are territorial inhabitants, but their 'territoriality' just works very differently from that of humans (shaped by human action though there actions are), especially in contemporary, highly technological and urbanised societies where our sense of reliance on and interdependence with our immediate natural surroundings is weak. Can democratic citizens be found in so many more spaces and places – living in forests, in holes in the ground, in the air, in the sea?

Traditionally, democratic theory has bought into view of citizen identity as individual, persistent and universal. Recent democratic innovations have challenged this emphasis from varied angles. If citizen identities are more elastic and particular, contingent and changeable, then those identities and their boundaries can be reconstructed and reconstrued in ways that many critics would regard as deepening and extending of our nations of both democracy and citizenship. The effort to rethink notions of representation is critical here. Arguably, democracy is not about the representation of given identities and interests; particular political structures and particular political cultures promote particular conceptions of citizenship and citizen identity, and that too is a matter of political representation in the sense of particular depictions or portrayals of citizens. I explore this further below.

What does democracy expect and demand of its citizens?

Where advocates of different views of democracy find or see citizens and citizen actions depends upon how those citizens are construed. How they are construed, likewise, has a major impact on what can be expected of democratic citizens. The main framework for discussions of expectations and demands is normally that of 'rights and obligations', and specifically the obligations in terms of citizens respecting the rights of others, and acting with a certain level of independence and public spiritedness (Smiley 1999).

The liberal-representative model of democracy primarily sees citizens' obligations in terms of obeying the law and playing a political role by voting in elections. Beyond that, generally speaking, the liberal citizen can just get on with it – pursuing their interests and their leisure. However, democracy, it seems, in the eyes of many contemporary theorists, does not make sufficient demands on its citizens; or does not have a sufficiently expansive or challenging conception of citizenship which might stretch as well as capture citizens' imaginations. Cosmopolitans, for example, would

expand our roles as citizens in a couple of related ways. First, in a more formal and technical sense, they would expand the range of politics within which we exercise familiar democratic roles, especially voting, from the local and national to the regional and global. And secondly – more complexly and more interestingly perhaps – cosmopolitans would have us stretch our imaginations not only to be public- and other-regarding with respect to our compatriots, but also with respect to people in other countries and regions. The first approach would have us paying greater heed to the situations and needs of others by virtue of the fact that we literally become fellow citizens in some sense; the second would do it by asking us to extend citizenly regard and sympathies despite the fact (almost *because* of the fact) that the others in question are not in formal terms fellow citizens. Ecological democrats, too, seek a stretching of our imaginations in ways that add demands and obligations to citizen roles. Having regard for more than one's own interests is fine; having less self-serving regard for fellow human citizens even better. But being prepared to live within the natural rhythms and confines of place, in other words to live in line with sustainability, constitutes a broader set of expanded citizen obligations.

Direct democrats offer a radical extension of (nevertheless) familiar liberal-representative democracy expectations of citizens. Direct democrats such as Budge (1996) for example would have us voting on issues and not just candidates, and voting more often and more systematically – a bit like a cross between today's Swiss and Californians. Direct democrats need, on one level, simply to note that most people in western democracies (and a range of others too) are much more educated than a few decades ago, have much more access to politically relevant information, and so on. In other words, citizens can hardly help but be better informed today than (say) thirty or forty years ago. To up the ante a touch in terms of expectations for how many times voting choices will or ought to be exercised does not seem to make an extra demands of kind, just of time and number.

To engage, to be more other-regarding and public-oriented; these are threads which are common to reformist and more radical extensions of citizen expectations and obligations. Difference democrats raise the bar of expectations in a range of ways. First, they stress the need for citizens to recognise (and by recognising, affirm in some sense) differences and diversity (or conflicting aspects of identity and perspective) *within* individuals, as well as across social and cultural groups with highly divergent outlooks and perspectives in society as a whole. Agreement on policy or aspects of common identity across difference needs to be the result of dialogue that is open to and embraces the strength of diverse perspectives. Some feminist critics of standard notions of citizenship, in particular, have sought to extend our sense of what 'counts' as citizen activity across (differently conceived and various) public/private divides, and to take seriously what happens for example in the domestic sphere – child-rearing and domestic labour for example – as significant collective contributions made by citizens which should be valued and appreciated as part of an extended appreciation of what being a citizen involves (though as noted above feminist critics also stress the importance of action in the public sphere to advance feminist concerns).

What are the places of citizenship – where citizens are found? What are citizenly acts? We tend to think of citizenship in both cases as being more about the public side of the equation. But ecologists push citizenship more into the private sphere in the form of the home, for example, with such issues as the obligation to recycle

domestic waste – a public act with public consequences but performed in a private place. Child-rearing in the home might be public-in-private in this sense too. Sexual activity is presumably private in private, but perhaps there is a public dimension even there – or, certain discourses of citizenship might push debates in that direction. And bringing supposedly private acts into the public domain can be a way of highlighting hidden or overlooked inequalities that bear on public regard⁴.

What does democracy expect of its citizens? Enlarged mentality, greater participation, and more other-regarding actions – these are some of the key recent responses from theorists. Of course, on this question there have always been minimalists and maximalists, idealists and ‘realists’ among democratic theorists. Maximalist/idealists will always want better, more selfless, more publicly-oriented citizens. To that extent we are on familiar territory. But the sheer range and style of some of the challenges and pressures are distinctive, as we have seen.

Democratic spaces and citizen identities: rethinking political representation

Our responses to each of the three questions above prompts a concern with the notion of representation. The idea of electoral constituencies with a set of interests as the unit that requires representation is challenged by more mixed and differentiated notions of the interests and identities of citizens. In turn, the issue of who can represent, and how they can do it, looms large, challenging the boundaries and assumptions of representation theory. Further, we need to embrace the idea that political representatives construct portrayals or depictions of the represented, in order to be able to represent them. This is an unavoidable part of what it means to represent. We need to reconnect the idea of democratic representation with the practices of constituting citizen identities.

Jane Mansbridge’s recent advocacy of a shift in perspective from ‘singular, aggregatively-oriented, and district-based’ criteria for representation, to what she calls ‘plural, deliberatively-oriented, and systemic criteria’ (2003) is highly welcome. It is, however, restricted in that she develops it in the context of electoral representation only. More highly differentiated notions of citizen location, identity and expectation prompt us to look more closely at the democratic status of nonelectoral representation. Consider some of the types of new representative claim. First, a representative claim may be based on the cosmopolitan idea that larger human interests and needs that are vital and need to be represented or voiced, but are too wide to receive sufficient voice in a national political system need to be given such voice. One might consider for example the rock stars Bob Geldof and Bono and their advocacy of third world debt relief, famine relief and poverty alleviation. Second, a representative claim may be based on the fact that an important perspective – often shrouded by thin conceptions of liberal universalism - within a debate is not being heard or even voiced. For example a representative claim might be based on the idea that one is a surrogate spokesperson for a group that because of its geographical dispersion has no elected representative; or on one’s role as speaking for the interests of an oppressed or marginalized group. Third, a representative claim might be based on the notion that one stands for or speaks for a group that has a material or other ‘stake’ in a process or

⁴ On these and related issues of public and private, see Steinberger (1999).

a decision, and therefore has a right to have its interests included in the process. Procedures which incorporate ‘stakeholders’ in deliberative and decisional forums can be quite formal, as was the case for example at the Johannesburg World Summit on Environment and Development in 2002. Potential stakeholders might be new or potential constituencies. A radical vision of such a new constituency might be non-human animals and their interests, for example. Claims to represent or speak for human communities-of-fate which cross national boundaries may be another example (see Dobson 1996; Eckersley 2000).

A new politics of democratic citizenship may demand new modes of evaluating claims to democratic representation. How might democratic theorists evaluate such claims – not wanting to rule them out of court simply because of their non-elective basis? In practice there will be multiple and overlapping criteria, which much room for deliberation over their democratic credentials. To pick on possibilities which are most unusual and newest – thus connecting more to the democratic innovations discussed above - the criteria might include the following.

- A. Can a representative claim be acceptable precisely because it is untainted by formal election processes? Electoral pressures, it is sometimes argued, press those subject to them to look to short-term and parochial interests. They also force one to address – rhetorically at least – a wide array of concerns thinly rather than specific concerns in all their richness and complexity.
- B. Going one step further, is a claim acceptable precisely because it is untainted by formal membership of a state apparatus? A distinctive version of this criterion is Dryzek’s ‘contest of discourses’ approach. In my words rather than his, we could say that electoral processes are linked to the state, and that the state is tied into structural imperatives that prevent it from acting systematically in the interests of its citizens. Dryzek argues that ‘... we can step back and ask whether democracy does indeed require counting heads. I would argue that a logically complete alternative exists based on a conceptualisation of intersubjective communication in the public sphere as a matter of the contestation of discourses’ (Dryzek 2000, 84).
- C. Is a claim justified precisely because it taps into non-electoral modes of political participation, such as (a) deliberation, (b) through voluntary associations, or (c) dissenting activism? Deliberative forums, whether of randomly chosen or part-selected or within or between voluntary associations, can give rise to compelling claims to represent considered popular opinion. Similarly, people can ‘do it for themselves’ (Bang and Dyrberg 2000), pursuing ‘individualised collective action’ in new and innovative ways and in domains previously not thought of as political (Micheletti 2003). Dissenting activism can be conceived in terms of major social movements that seek to force a system to live up to its own ideals. A key argument here is that democracy is not just about deliberation within established forums. Those forums can become sclerotic and moribund if they are not subject to pressure and renewal through outsider activism and dissent arising from a renewal and expansion of domains of citizen action.

The domains of democracy and citizenship are under pressure to expand, if recent theoretical innovations are to be believed. But such expansion brings with it the need to rethink the basic concept of representation in political theory – in its identity-producing effects, on the one hand, and in the criteria we might apply to increasingly prominent claims to be representative put forward by unelected actors in varied political spaces.

Conclusion

It is clear that the idea of democratic citizenship is being pushed into new, expanded domains. These domains are ones of kind (e.g. crossings of the human/non-human boundary), breadth (e.g. encompassing private spaces and actions as well as classically public ones), and depth (e.g. seeing citizens as more complex characters with more differentiated identities and potentialities). Dominant and new perspectives on democracy give us different ideas as to where citizens are to be found, what to expect of them, and how they ought to be understood. These perspectives press us, in turn, to rethink the scope and meaning of basic concepts, notably that of representation, previously imprisoned within a narrow confines that resonate with a thin conception of democratic citizenship that is increasingly under fire.

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