Chapter 17

Citizen and Citizenship in the Era of Globalization: Theories and Aspects of the Classic and Modern Citoyen

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ABSTRACT

The present chapter offers a short account of citizenship, its history, its constitution, and its main theoretical approaches. It is divided in four principal sections. The first examines the two main theories of citizenship in their historical and normative context, thus the republican and liberal approach of citizenship as they were formed in the ancient Greek and Roman tradition, as well as in their current feminist critic. The second part focuses on the analyses of what seems up until now to be the most influential work on citizenship, the essay of the British sociologist, Thomas Humphrey Marshall “Citizenship and Social Class,” which was published in 1950 and since then is considered to be the stepping-stone of the international literature on citizenship. The third part presents the “constitution” of citizenship, the elements of which the notion of citizen is crafted, thus membership in a certain political community, rights, and the ability of democratic participation. Finally, the last part examines the modern apprehension of citizenship, its supranational dynamic, its ability to act as a means of integration and coercion in the modern liberal democracies, while theories of pluralism, cosmopolitanism, and post-nationalism are taken into account. Instead of conclusions, the chapter closes with a short post-script concerning the fallacies and prospects of a European citizenship.

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INTRODUCTION: ASPECTS, DIMENSIONS, AND THE VALUE OF CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship is an old and at the same time relatively new concept. Formed in the city states of Ancient Greece, evolved from the Roman Empire era to the modern nation-states where it grew as synonymous to the notions of membership, democratic agency and rights, it came to the focus of theoretical attention especially during the 1990s (Banier, 1995). Primarily, citizenship was attached to political participation in public offices and electing procedures, as voting and public demonstrations. Nowadays, it is considered to be a broad concept that embraces the totality of interests that personal and public relations forge in a certain political community. Its immense value lies in its comprehensive concept as well as in its rare character. Democratic citizenship shields via the political autonomy that it guarantees, also the collective, social and personal autonomy of the individual. Moreover, though valued as a concept, citizenship is a rare reality. Statistics show that apathy and absence in political participation is becoming the rule rather than the exemption, with the U.S.A. democracy, becoming the most glaring paradigm. Additionally, the modern nation states are hosting nowadays a respected number of non-citizens, legal or illegal immigrants. As far as they are concerned, citizenship is a non-right, a form of exclusion, of inequality and discrimination (Benhabib, 2004; Castles & Davidson, 2000).

Today, the vast waves of migration in Europe and America and the consequences of the world globalization are challenging our apprehensions of citizenship. Traditionally, the modern understanding of citizenship was forged in the process of state building and attached to the notion of nationality. Nationality defined citizenship by becoming the sociological and normative basis of identity and solidarity between the members of a political community. Nevertheless, globalization and immigration have currently reattached this close connection by challenging the traditional bond between nation and state building. Ethnicity and nationality are becoming rarer in the contemporary liberal democracies, which more and more tend to be internally diverse and multicultural. At the same time, the globalization process is pressuring the territorial dimension of the nation-state, thus eroding the political empowerment and the social and civil rights of their citizens. Under these novel circumstances, new supranational apprehensions of citizenship are born (Dobson, 2006), such as the notion of European citizenship guaranteed by the Maastricht Treaty, or the cosmopolitan approach proposed by the neo-Kantian theorists (Hutchings & Dannreuther, 2006).

In this frame, the present chapter will offer a short theoretical presentation of the notion of citizenship; its history, its constitution and its main theoretical approaches. The chapter is divided in four principal sections. The first, examines the two main theories of citizenship in their historical and normative context, thus the republican and liberal approach of citizenship as they were formed in the ancient Greek and Roman tradition, as well as in their current feminist critic. The second part focuses in the analyses of what seems up until now to be the most influential work on citizenship, the work of the British sociologist, Thomas Humphrey Marshall ‘Citizenship and Social Class’ which was published in 1950 and since then it is considered to be the stepping stone of the literature on citizenship. The third part presents the ‘constitution’ of citizenship, the elements of which the notion of citizen is crafted, thus membership in a certain political community, rights and the ability of democratic participation. Finally, the last part examines the modern apprehensions of citizenship, its supranational dynamic, its ability to act as a means of integration and coercion in the modern liberal democracies and the theories of pluralism, cosmopolitanism and post-nationalism are taken into account. Instead