

Citizenship and Rights

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Citizenship is generally understood as referring to the relationship between the individual/collective and the state. The commonly accepted definition of citizenship by the British Sociologist T.H. Marshall as 'full and equal membership in a political community' denotes (a) the unit of membership, i.e., the political community, which in the modern context is the nation-state, and (b) the nature of that membership, i.e., full and equal. Citizenship would thus manifest a significant aspect of the relationship among people who live together in a nation. It comprises, therefore, of a range of issues and elements, including, rights, freedom and equality, political allegiance to the state, civic loyalties within the community, and cultural and emotional ties and identities that mediate the relationship among citizens and the state.

Thus citizenship is no longer seen only in narrow legal-formal terms and has acquired significance as an analytical category and a conceptual tool for understanding social reality. It is increasingly being seen as a substantive notion capturing a range of issues that manifest the lived experiences of people. While the underlying principle defining citizenship is equality, the fact that society is hierarchical, means that socio-economic categories of gender, class, caste, race, nationality etc., determine the extent to which we enjoy our rights of citizenship, have access to various resources that equip us for citizenship, or even the extent to which we can exercise our duties of citizenship. A host of important questions addressing inequalities among nation-states in the world have also become integral to understanding citizenship. Moreover, while one may have grown up thinking that citizenship is primarily concerned with rights and duties of individuals, it is become acceptable to talk about cultural rights, whereby cultural/religious communities, while participating in the common national political life, have the right to maintain their own cultures. Rights of citizenship therefore, may then be seen as not just accruing to individuals as citizen, but also to individuals as a part of a community, and the rights of community as such.

What is Citizenship?

The origins of the idea of citizenship are generally traced to the ancient Greek and Roman *republics*. The word itself is derived from the Latin word *civis* and its Greek equivalent *polites* which means member of the *polis* or city. With the development of capitalism and liberalism, the idea of the *citizen as an individual bearing rights* irrespective of her/his caste, class, race, gender, ethnicity, etc., became entrenched. Since the nineteen eighties however, *globalisation* and *multiculturalism* have provided the contexts within which this notion of citizenship has been challenged. The nation, it is argued, is no longer the sole unit of membership, and the ideas of world citizenship and human rights beyond national borders is being earnestly talked about. Similarly, the individual, it is argued has been displaced as the core of citizenship theory and *rights of cultural communities and groups* have started gaining ground. Thus, it may be said that the idea of citizenship has developed over several historical periods. Its form and substance have not remained the

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same but changed according to specific historical contexts. The various forms which citizenship took historically have not, however, disappeared entirely. They have not only influenced the modern meanings of citizenship, they also exist as different strands within the bundle of meanings surrounding citizenship.

Citizenship: Historical Trajectory

The development of the ideas which surround citizenship can be attributed to three broad historical periods: (a) **classical** Graeco-Roman periods (fourth century B.C. onwards), (b) **late medieval** and **early modern** periods including the period of the French and American Revolutions, (c) the developments in the **nineteenth century** corresponding to the growing influence of liberalism and capitalism and, (d) the contests over the form and substance of citizenship in the **late twentieth century** with increasing preoccupation with multiculturalism and community rights. Two dominant strands or **traditions** of rights and citizenship can be seen to have developed over these periods (a) *civic republicanism* characterised by the ideas of *common good*, public spirit, political participation and *civic virtue* and, (b) *liberal citizenship* with an emphasis on individual rights and private interests. The Marxists and feminists have criticised both these traditions and have suggested radical ways of rethinking citizenship. The criticism of liberal/imperial citizenship by Gandhi and his vision of citizenship based on notions of duties rather than rights constitutes another way of thinking about citizenship.

The philosophical roots of citizenship can be traced to the classical Greek understanding of man as a *political being* and citizenship as *the capacity to govern and to be governed*. While the former is indicative of the primacy accorded to a man's identity as citizen (restricted, however, to free native-born men) requiring active participation in the political community (the city-states), the Roman Imperial tradition introduced the idea of citizenship as a legal / juridical status implying equality before the law and equal protection. Thus a larger and more heterogeneous population, was integrated into the Roman Empire, by *subjecting* them to the protection of a uniform set of laws. Thus, the principle of imperial inclusiveness may be seen as having brought a *passive notion of citizenship* as a legal *status*. Alongside, however, a nostalgia or a longing for the classical notion of *citizenship as activity*, with an emphasis on civic virtue and public duty, remained. The *janapadas* of ancient India with their unique system of participatory decision making in popular assemblies of the people (the *sabhas* and *samitis*) which in some instances also elected the king, draw affinity with elements of Greek citizenship in that both are associated with autonomous, self-governing communities requiring active participation of citizens in the governance of the community.

The French Revolution (1789) can be seen as a revolt against the passive citizenship of the late medieval and early modern times. The revolution attempted to resurrect the ideals of active participation against the claims of the monarchical/imperial state. Apart from attempting to change the apolitical/passive lives of citizens, the French revolutionary tradition introduced an important element to citizenship which changed the way in which rights were incorporated into the notion of citizenship. *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* which followed in the wake of the revolution, brought in the notion of the citizen as a 'free and autonomous individual' who enjoyed rights equally with others and participated in making decisions which all agreed to obey. The manner in which citizenship is understood today as a system of horizontal (equal) rights as against the

hierarchical (unequal) privileges which accrued to persons by reason of higher birth, has its roots in the doctrines of the French Revolution.

With the development of capitalist market relations and the growing influence of liberalism in the nineteenth century, the notion of citizens as individuals with private and conflicting interests gradually gained primacy, as citizenship as civic activity, public spiritedness and active political participation was relegated to a vestigial past. Till most of the twentieth century, the bias in the liberal theory of citizenship in favour of the individual citizen continued and citizenship was seen as a legal status which gave the citizen certain rights assuring protection from state interference. It would be appropriate to discuss here T.H.Marshall's account of the development of citizenship in Britain as outlined in his influential work *Citizenship and Social Class*, published in 1950. In this work Marshall studies the growth of citizenship alongside capitalism in a peculiar relationship of collusion and conflict. Marshall describes the development of citizenship as a *process of expanding equality* against the *inequality of social class*. He distinguishes three strands or bundles of rights which constitute citizenship: civil, political and social, each having a distinct history specific to a particular century. *Civil rights* which developed in the *eighteenth century* have been defined by Marshall as 'rights necessary for individual freedom'. These were 'negative' rights in the sense that they limited or checked the exercise of government power and included freedoms of speech, movement, conscience, the rights to equality before the law and the right to own property. *Political rights* viz., the right to vote, the right to stand for elections and the right to hold public office, developed by and large in the *nineteenth century* and provided the individual with the opportunity to participate in the political life of the community. *Social rights* which developed largely in the *twentieth century* guaranteed the individual a minimum economic/social status and provided the basis for the exercise of both civil and political rights. For Marshall social rights are 'positive' rights 'to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in society'. These standards of life and the social heritage of society are realised through active intervention by the state in the form of social services (the welfare state) and educational system.

The modern notion of citizenship as pointed out earlier, seeks to constitute free and equal citizens, by disregarding ascriptive inequalities and differences (of culture, caste, gender, race etc.). Thus citizens are conceived as bearing rights and exercising their rights equally with other citizens. Conditions of equality i.e. conditions in which citizens are able to exercise their rights equally are ensured by making circumstances of inequality i.e. race, ethnicity, gender, caste etc., irrelevant for the exercise of the rights of citizenship. The citizen thus is the rights bearing *individual* whose caste, race, gender, ethnicity etc. are seen as unrelated to the status of citizenship. Seen in this manner citizenship constitutes an overarching identity concealing all other identities to produce what are called *masked/unmarked* (and therefore) 'equal' citizens. In much of liberal theory till most of the twentieth century, the bias in favour of the individual rights bearing citizen pursuing private interests, persisted. The idea of citizenship as outlined in this (liberal) framework, has distinctive **significance** as well as some obvious **limitations**:

(a) **Significance**: The *generalisation of modern citizenship across the social structure* means that all persons are equal before the law and no person or group is legally privileged. Understood in this manner citizenship is an *inclusive* category. It regards all

differences (of race, class, caste, gender, religion etc.) as *irrelevant* in order to create free and equal citizens.

(b) **Limitation:** The provision of citizenship across social structures without regard to differences, may in effect mean *overlooking actually existing inequalities*. Thus, whereas *formal/legal equality* may be assured by the liberal framework, this equality is unlikely to translate itself into *substantive equality* unless the *practical ability to exercise rights* or *legal capacities* imparted by citizenship, are actually available to all. In other words, the liberal framework disregards the fact that those *disadvantaged by the existing structures of inequality* viz., class, caste, race, gender etc., are unable to participate in the community of citizens, on an equal basis, despite the fact that as citizens they are (equal) legal members of the community.

New Contexts and Changing Concerns: Multiculturalism

Till most of the twentieth century the dominant understanding of citizenship continued to place the individual at its core, and citizenship was seen as a legal status indicating the possession of rights which an individual held equally with others. This dominant liberal model of citizenship, as seen above, has some limitations. Contemporary debates on citizenship and rights have therefore questioned the idea that the (individual) citizen can enjoy rights independent of the contexts/circumstances to which s/he belongs i.e., class, race, ethnicity, gender etc. Since the nineteen eighties multiculturalism, plurality, diversity and difference have become significant terms of reference in thinking about citizenship. Given that modern societies are increasingly being recognised as multicultural, the liberal understanding of the idea of citizenship has been opened up for debate. The specific contexts, cultural, religious, ethnic, linguistic etc. of citizens are now seen as determining citizenship in significant ways. This ongoing contest aims to make visible those differences which liberal theory saw as irrelevant for understanding citizenship. In most societies ethnic, religious and racial communities have pressed for rights which would look at their special cultural contexts and substantiate the formal equality of citizenship. A notion of *differentiated citizenship* has therefore gained currency within citizenship theory to accommodate the needs of specific cultural groups. The term differentiated citizenship was used by Iris Marion Young in 1989. It advocates the incorporation of members of certain (cultural) groups not only as individuals but also as members of groups, their rights depending in part on this group membership catering to their special needs.

Contemporary debates on citizenship and rights have questioned the idea that the citizen can enjoy rights independent of the contexts to which s/he belongs. A significant terrain of contestation has opened up in the nineteen eighties in citizenship theory, with multiculturalism, plurality, diversity and difference having become significant terms of reference for re-theorising citizenship. This contest pertains in effect to the unmasking of those differences that were earlier seen as irrelevant to citizenship. Notions of multiculturalism and minority rights have been invoked in contemporary times, as democratic values, whereby cultural communities can lay claims to inherent rights, and negotiate fair terms of inclusion in the national political space. This influential strand within citizenship theory has sought to invest in multiculturalism as the core element of democratic citizenship that cherishes cultural diversity and envisages a society in which different communities forge a common identity while retaining their cultural provenance.

The case for a *differentiated citizenship* was put forth by theorists who felt that the common rights of citizenship, originally defined by (and for) white men in a class-

differentiated society could not accommodate the needs of large numbers of ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, who feel excluded from the 'common' rights to citizenship. They emphasised that instead of masking these differences in the allocation of rights, effort must be made to take account of the specificity of the different circumstances of citizens. An increasing number of theorists argue that different groups can be accommodated into common citizenship only by adopting what Iris Marion Young calls 'differentiated citizenship' which means that members of certain groups should be accommodated not only as individuals but also through their group and their rights would depend partially upon their group membership. Young argues that in a society where some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, insisting that as citizens persons should leave behind their particular affiliations and experiences, and adopt a general point of view, serves only to reinforce the privileged, for the perspective and interests of the privileged will tend to dominate this unified public, marginalising or silencing those of other groups.

Seeking to redefine the principle of equality, to make it compatible with the 'multicultural present', Will Kymlicka too provides a framework of representation and membership which accommodates cultural and group differences in a way that a person's group membership and membership in a cultural community is not of any disadvantage to her. Moreover, Kymlicka also seeks to find a meeting ground between the rights of cultural communities to self preservation and rights of individuals defined as civil and political rights. Kymlicka suggests that demands of national minorities and ethnic groups may be accommodated within a framework of democratic citizenship (a) by protecting the common rights of all citizens which basically means the protection of civil and political rights of individuals: freedom of association, religion, speech, mobility and political organisation for protecting group difference and (b) by accommodating cultural diversity through special legal and constitutional measures, with members of specific groups being guaranteed special rights or as Young would call them group-specific or group-differentiated rights. Kymlicka identifies three forms of group-differentiated rights: (i) self-government rights (ii) polyethnic rights (iii) special representation rights. (i) Self government rights recognize some kind of political autonomy or territorial jurisdiction of national minorities which they claim were not relinquished by their (often involuntary) incorporation into the larger state. Such rights may manifest in federal structures where the federal sub-units boundaries give some autonomy. (ii) Polyethnic rights concern themselves with specific rights of immigrant communities, and represent a challenge to the Anglo-conformity model, which assumes that they should abandon all aspects of their ethnic heritage and assimilate to existing cultural norms and practice. At first such rights may take the form of demanding the right to express their particularities and difference without fear of prejudice or discrimination in the mainstream society. Ethnic groups have, however, expanded this right demanding positive action in the form of protection, preservation and nurturing from the state to root out discrimination and preserve their existence as distinct entities. Some ethnic and religious minorities have also demanded various forms of public funding of their cultural functions – funding of ethnic associations, magazines and festivals. The most controversial demands have perhaps been those that demand exception from laws and regulations that disadvantage them given their religious practices e.g., Jews and Muslims in Britain have sought exemption from Sunday closing, Jews in the US have sought to wear the *yarmulka* during military service, Muslim girls in France and Britain have asked for exemption from school dress code – to be allowed to wear the *hijab* or *chadors*. (iii) Special representation rights: There has been increasing interest by national and ethnic

groups, as well as non-ethnic groups - women, poor, disabled - in the idea of special representation rights. This basically translates into democratising the structures of state by making it more representative, e.g., making legislatures more representative by including members of ethnic and racial minorities and women, the poor, disabled etc. Defence of these rights has come both on the basis of rectification of oppression and also for providing opportunities for self-determination.

Citizenship theory today: dividing lines

Since the nineteen eighties, as we saw in the previous section, attempts have been made to *dislodge the rights-bearing individual* from the core of citizenship theory. The notion of individual rights has been counterbalanced by claims of *cultural communities* to special rights catering to their distinctive needs. The *centrality of rights in citizenship theory has also been questioned* in some quarters and there appears to be a revival of interest in the republican tradition of citizenship with its emphasis on the primacy of *common good and civic duties* over individual/private interests. We shall take up these two contests over the nature of citizenship in this section.

Before that, however, let us recollect here what we learnt in the earlier sections about the *two main strands* in the theory of citizenship as they emerged in its historical evolution viz., the classical tradition or *civic republicanism*, and the modern *liberal* tradition. The dividing lines in citizenship theory today in effect emerge from these two traditions of citizenship, each of which signifies two different understandings of what it means to be a citizen. The first i.e. the republican tradition, describes citizenship as an office, a responsibility, a burden proudly assumed; the second i.e. the liberal tradition, describes it as a status and entitlement, a right or set of rights passively enjoyed. The first makes citizenship the core of human life, the second makes it its outer frame. The first assumes a closely knit body of citizens, its members committed to one another; the second assumes a diverse and loosely connected body, its members (mostly) committed elsewhere. According to the first, the citizen is the primary political actor, for the second law-making and administration are someone else's business, the citizen's business is private. In the remainder of this section we shall see that contests among citizenship theorists today emanate from these two basic difference in the conceptualisation of the form and substance of citizenship.

Individual / Community

One set of division among citizenship theorist today can be seen along the lines of the question *who or what forms the core of citizenship* - the individual or the wider context of which s/he is a part i.e., the cultural (ethnic, religious etc.) community. We have seen that the liberal (individualist) notion of citizenship emerged as a strand in the French revolutionary tradition and strengthened with the growth of capitalism. The citizen in *liberal* theory is the free floating individual and citizenship is a legal status which enables citizens to enjoy rights equally with other citizens each of whom, however, pursues distinct personal interests. In this view the conditions for an equal enjoyment of rights is laid out by making irrelevant the particular contexts of individuals i.e., their special circumstances defined by facts of birth viz., race, caste, culture, ethnicity, gender etc. This view is counterposed by the *communitarians* who, in the civic republican tradition, assert the importance of the contexts of individuals in determining the extent to which rights can be enjoyed equally with others. These theorists emphasise that instead of masking these differences in the allocation of rights, effort must be made to take account of the specificity of the different circumstances of citizens. An increasing number of theorists argue that a

large number of ethnic, religious and linguistic groups feel excluded from the 'common' rights to citizenship. These groups can be accommodated into common citizenship only by adopting what Iris Marion Young calls 'differentiated citizenship' which means that members of certain groups should be accommodated not only as individuals but also through the group and their rights would depend in part upon their group membership. Young, among the most influential theorists of cultural pluralism, asserts that the attempt to create a universal conception of citizenship which transcends group differences is fundamentally unjust to historically oppressed groups: 'In a society where some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, insisting that as citizens persons should leave behind their particular affiliations and experiences and adopt a general point of view serves only to reinforce the privileged for the perspective and interests of the privileged will tend to dominate this unified public, marginalising or silencing those of other groups'. (Young, 1989, p.257)

Duties / Rights

The second set of divisions follows the same lines as the first. The contest here is in terms of what are the defining *premises of citizenship* viz., the primacy of the public/political and civic life *or* the primacy of individual interests and differences. The concept of 'civic virtue' and 'good' citizenship which emerged in the classical Graeco-Roman world forming part of the republican tradition revived later in Renaissance Italy and eighteenth century America and France forms an integral part of the notion of the citizenship which affords primacy to civic and public life. Those who subscribe to these ideas give importance to the notion of *active citizenship*. Citizenship in such a formulation becomes constitutive of civic duties, civic activity, public spiritedness and active political participation. Where civic republicanism stresses a stern adherence to citizen's duties towards civic life, the liberal notion gives priority to individual interests and differences and stresses the citizen's entitlement to justice and rights. For them the richness of private life is of primary importance and citizenship is constitutive primarily of some fundamental rights. Rights are primary in this formulation and their purpose is to protect the inner personal world and to provide the freedom for private pursuits and individual creativity without encroachment from conflicting interests. It may be noted here that in the civic republican tradition, rights would be regarded as conditions which *follow* the exercise of a citizen's duty to participate in the political process *rather than being the prior condition*.

Broadly two strands of 'neo-republicanism' may be identified. One strand exhibits disillusionment with the 'thin democracy' that liberal citizenship has generated over the years, manifested in political apathy and passivity. While theorists on the left would like to roll back passivity by enabling and 'empowering' citizens through democratic participation, radical pluralists like Chantal Mouffe believe that a relation of 'democratic equivalence' may be established through political participation and the articulation of difference. These notions of active citizenship conform to the distinction between civil society and political society, where civil society is an extra-political arena in which individuals enter in order to articulate their purely private concerns. On the other hand, political society is generated whenever individuals communicate not their purely private concerns but rather matters of shared importance, in order to influence or make demands on the state.

A different articulation of active citizenship is found in Michael Walzer. Acknowledging the plurality of social life, Walzer proposes that citizenship provides a common binding

principle. Citizenship as a binding principle makes itself manifest in civil society, 'the setting of settings', which provides the space where individuals as part of diverse social groups are trained in civility and self-restraint. It is in this articulation of public life, in the shared forum of participation of diverse groups that individuals think of a common good beyond their own conceptions of the good life. Critical of the growing numbers of people who are 'radically disengaged' or 'passive clients of the state' Walzer is equally uncomfortable with political participation as the only form of active citizenship. He places faith in the idea of 'critical associationalism', which is based in the belief that in the modern world the density of associational life and the activities and understandings that go with it need to be recaptured and relearned, and proposes that participation in voluntary organizations of the civil society – churches, families, ethnic associations, voluntary groups, schools – inculcate the civic virtues, which bind citizens in mutual obligation.

On the other hand, another strand represented by communitarian theorists such as Alisdair MacIntyre, Amitai Etzioni and Michael Sandel blame the passivity of liberal citizenship for the disintegration of social bonds and the rise in anomie and alienation in modern societies. Broadly speaking, this strand, like the above discussed strands, extracts from the republican tradition, the focus on community and duty. Yet, it is distinct from the above since it omits from its programme, direct political participation and the republican concern for freedom. Moreover, in their quest for ways to a 'restored sense of neighbourhood', and even a 'national togetherness', they are intolerant of the political and plural diversity that the above strands espouse. MacIntyre and Sandel represent, therefore, the growing strand of social and political conservatism, which while dismissing the idea of the 'unencumbered self', rejects all forms of pluralities, arguing that the 'politics of right' should be replaced by a 'politics of common good'. We may recall that in Marshall's formulation social rights constituted the third phase of the evolution of rights, coinciding with the development of the Welfare State, and instrumental in integrating the poor, migrants and racial minorities into the fold of citizenship. Theorists of the 'new right', however, see social rights as promoting passivity and a culture of dependency among the poor. Working within a framework of common good and common obligation of all citizens, they argue for a workfare programme instead of a welfare programme, cutting back the safety net of the poor, and tying welfare benefits to work responsibilities. Unlike the civil society theorists who argue for the enhancement of responsible citizenship through participation in institutions of civil society, the 'new right' sees the 'market' characterised by free trade, deregulation, tax-cuts, the weakening of trade unions, and the tightening of unemployment benefits, as the 'school' where citizenship 'virtues' of initiative, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency are learned.

Critiques and Alternatives

(a) Marxist critique of liberal citizenship

Marxist criticism of bourgeois citizenship has focussed on its failure to address itself to inequalities in modern capitalist societies. In an inherently unequal system, which thrives on producing and perpetuating class inequalities, rights can only be 'superficial trappings' of equality. *Civil and political rights* were products of bourgeois revolutions, and developed, alongside capitalism. While these rights alleviated some ill effects of capitalism, they did not intend to, and could not therefore, dismantle the structures of

inequality which constitute capitalist societies. Attacks in recent decades by a strand of liberal opinion on *social rights*, citizenship rights catering to the claims of marginalised sections of the population to welfare benefits from the state, prompted some writers on the left to defend rights. Scholars like Amy Bartholomew have put forward a case to show that the notion of 'rich individuality' and 'self development' in Marx's notion of 'human emancipation', shows Marx's commitment to rights. Bartholomew argues that Marx's criticism of rights is basically directed towards the understanding of rights which identifies it with the 'rights of man' - the so called natural rights - which act as 'boundary markers' separating man from man and the larger community of which he is a part. Rights for Marx contribute to 'rich individuality' i.e., to the making of the creative individual whose potential is realised most fully within and in harmony with the community.

(b) Feminists redefine Citizenship

Feminists of all strands have criticised the *gender neutrality and gender blindness* of citizenship theory i.e., its failure to take into account, (a) the patriarchal character of modern societies and, (b) the manner in which gender determines access to citizenship rights. Feminists have pointed out that most historical conceptualisations of citizenship have been inimical to women, either excluding them from citizenship altogether as in the classical tradition, or integrating them, as in the French Revolutionary tradition, indirectly and unequally as citizen-consorts or companions of citizens (i.e., men). Carole Pateman suggests that modern liberal citizenship while not entirely excluding women, incorporates them on the basis of their socially useful/biologically determined (determined that is, by their biological constitution and corresponding roles viz., child bearing and rearing). Incorporation in this manner slots women into dependent roles as mothers and wives, placing them outside the sphere of politics, and distancing them from resources like education, property, job opportunities etc., which equip individuals for political participation. The gender blindness of citizenship theory has been so pervasive, feminists argue, that any account of the evolution of citizenship, can retain its coherence only by moving women to the margins as aberrations in the general trend. Marshall's study of citizenship, for example, could retain the 'main story' of the unfolding of citizenship as the gradual generalisation/universalisation of rights, only by 'including' women as historical anomalies i.e., as individuals whose position was 'peculiar' and not relevant to the main story.

(c) A Gandhian notion of Citizenship

A Gandhian notion of citizenship can be seen as consisting of elements of civic republicanism, identified as a commitment to the 'common good', civic duty and active citizenship. The commitment in Gandhi to a community of interests is interspersed, however, with an equally strong faith in individual autonomy and distrust of the oppressive potential of state power. Distrust of the oppressive structures of the modern state, much of which emanated from Gandhi's experiences with the colonial state in South Africa and India, shaped his commitment to a moral right of the individual to rebel. Resisting an unjust government was an important element of Gandhi's 'duties of citizenship'. This is brought out clearly in his enunciation of the rules of 'civil disobedience' which obliged the civil resister to follow certain codes of conduct while voluntarily breaking law and when imprisoned.

The rational (individual) citizen is at the core of Gandhi's notion of active citizenship. This citizen is, however, constrained by the commitment to 'common good'. The main elements of Gandhi's notion of the 'common good' are constituted by the pre-eminence of

societal interests, spiritualism and duties towards society, over individual interests, materialism, and individual rights against the state or individual interests against other members of society, respectively. The ideas of *trusteeship* or common possession of production and *sarvodaya* or the uplift of all abolishing distinctions of class, caste, religion, gender etc., faith in *shram* or bread labour so that no one is dependent on another for the fulfillment of their basic needs and a moral duty to create a just society catering to *human dignity*, may be seen as the other elements constituting democratic citizenship in Gandhi.

Globalisation, world citizenship, and human rights

An influential strand of citizenship theorists holds that in a globalised, interdependent and inter-connected world, marked by transnational movement of populations and multicultural national populations one can no longer talk of citizenship in terms of membership in a territorially limited *nation-state*, the hitherto uncontested unit of membership. They propose the delinking of relationship between citizenship and the nation-state, replacing it with global/world citizenship with its basis in human rights. Yasemin Soysal, for example, argues that globalisation has brought in a 'new and more universal' concept of citizenship that has 'universal personhood' rather than 'national belonging' as its core principle. Universal personhood is further augmented by the global system of human rights law, the United Nations network, regional governance etc., that have ushered in the idea of a global civil society. The assurances guaranteed by membership of this global civil society make the securities of nation-state membership redundant. Much of this assurance, it is argued, has emanated from the high degree of agreement on the need for human rights, recognition of human frailty, and the idea of 'global risks'.

The emphasis on world citizenship with human rights at its core is, however, riddled with contradictions. Despite the increased role envisaged for trans-national frameworks of cooperation, human rights by themselves are not able to ensure the development of participatory networks essential for safeguarding rights. Human rights are moreover, always contingent on their recognition and enforcement by nation-states. Moreover, the emphasis on human rights and the world citizen is counterbalanced by a simultaneous trend of 'reinforcement of citizenship' marked by the invocation of stringent immigration laws, the fortification of national and regional boundaries, and emphasis on 'descent' and 'blood ties' in consideration for citizenship. Moreover, human rights, like 'citizens', are almost always articulated in abstract and universalistic, i.e., context free terms, masking the diversity and historicity of citizenship and rights.

Conclusion

Citizenship, in its modern understanding, refers to full and equal membership in the political community, which refers in the present global context to the nation-state. Citizenship, however, also provides a terrain where a number of views contest each other over its form and substance. Historically, civic republicanism formed the most influential understanding of citizenship. The dominant understanding of citizenship today comes from the liberal tradition which sees it as constituting a set of individual rights. Cultural pluralists and communitarians, however, regard these rights as meaningless, unless they also take into account the specific contexts of the rights bearing individuals. The Marxists and feminists would rather like to see citizenship emerge from structures which dismantle repressive social, economic and political relationships of class and gender respectively. Another strand of thinking, following the civic republican tradition, would like to see citizenship as a measure of activity, as a manifestation of civic virtue and duties, which in

turn would create an egalitarian society/community. These diverse understandings of citizenship make it an important concept and significant for understanding modern democratic societies.

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Questions

Q.1 What are the strengths and limitations of the liberal notion of citizenship?

Q.2 How have the feminists reconceptualised citizenship?

Q.3 How has the idea of 'differential citizenship' sought to modify the liberal notion of citizenship?

Q.4 What are the dividing lines in citizenship theory today? How do they correspond to the historical division between the civic republican and liberal traditions of citizenship?

Q.5 How have contemporary concerns with world citizenship and human rights unsettled the core elements of citizenship.