

SOCIAL IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP: INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

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Social psychologists have often been criticized for treating the processes they studied as universal and for thereby ignoring the historical context in which they were embedded (Gergen, 1973; Israel & Tajfel, 1972; Tajfel, 1981). While this may not be much of a problem when investigating "deep" cognitive processes, it is a key issue when social psychologists study the very stuff of history: group processes and intergroup relations (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). It is with this concern in mind that we prepared this special issue on citizenship, a concept that lies at the intersection of social psychology, sociology, and political science and that has recently gained prominence in these social sciences.

In modern democracies, citizenship involves direct or indirect participation in the exercise of sovereignty. But beyond this strict definition, the notion of citizenship has come to incorporate rights of a diverse nature. According to the classical distinction proposed by Marshall, these may be defined as civil, social and political (Marshall, 1950). As it gained momentum in recent times, the notion of citizenship has undergone multiple redefinitions that blur these traditional distinctions, rearticulate the civil and the political, and reshuffle the debate between citizenship and identity. This special issue will illustrate many of these developments.

Why study citizenship from a social-psychological perspective? One reason is certainly that social psychologists can enlighten the understanding of this "essentially contested concept" (Gallie, quoted by Lister, 1997) with their theoretical and empirical knowledge on social identification processes. Another reason is that in studying citizenship issues, much can be gained for the study of social identity itself. This concept, which refers to "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255) is at the core of one of the dominant contemporary theories on intergroup relations: Social

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Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). New dimensions of citizenship brought to the fore by the current political transformations, especially the emergence of a supranational frame of identification (Europe) and of multiple identities in the public sphere, call for a study of social identity in connection with the notion of citizenship. The papers in this issue approach this articulation from different angles while converging towards a conceptualization of social identity and citizenship as *non essentialized* and *inherently linked with action*. Indeed, the different contributions emphasize the active construction of meaningful categories or the differing ways in which the content of pre-existing categories is incorporated, or contested (Duveen, 2001; Reicher & Hopkins, 1997; Reicher, Hopkins, & Condor, 1997). These are the aspects we shall try to delineate in this introduction.

Towards a De-Essentialized View of Citizenship

Emerging after the industrial revolution and still dominant, the traditional national model of citizenship is based on a construction of the State as representing a single ethnic group or "nation" (Breuilly, 1982; Gellner, 1994; Hobsbawm, 1990). The form of identification presumed in this model is "ethnic" in its form i.e., it presupposes the construction of a nation sharing a common culture, history, language, religion, ancestors and/or any combination thereof. This view of identification requires a subjective homogenization of the national citizenry, often realized through an essentialization of the nation. In psychological terms, loyalty and support for the State is thought to derive from identification with the group it is supposed to represent (Hobsbawm, 1983).

Several papers in this issue question the relevance of this model. The paper by Licata, Klein, Casini, Coscenza and Azzi (2003) addresses it in the context of the transition from the national to the European level of identification. While current approaches to social identity offer an appropriate framework for dealing with identification at different levels of abstraction (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), they rest on the assumption that identification with a group presupposes its homogenization. Contrary to this model, Licata et al. suggest that any positive representation of the in-group can drive some form of identification to the extent that it is construed as consistent with the group's interest. The paper therefore focuses on the role of subjective interpretational processes in mediating the relation between similarity and identification rather than viewing identification as an automatic consequence of similarity.

The question of what drives people to support, or to contest, existing authorities and institutions has attracted social psychological interest for

decades. Yet, one may argue that recent conceptualizations of such loyalty have been largely based on an "ethnic" view of citizenship. Individuals are thought to support a group to the extent that they self-define as members of this group, which, in turn, demands that they view it as a cohesive entity (see e.g., Castano, 1998; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Hogg, 1987; Hogg & Hardie, 1991). While Licata et al. question the view that similarity is the key to identification, which determines loyalty, Depuiset and Butera (2003) address the issue of loyalty through the distinction, offered by Schatz and Staub (1997) between "constructive" and "blind" patriotism. The latter reflects the classic form of loyalty, characteristic of "classic" nationalism and based on an unmitigated support to the in-group whereas the former incorporates a critical dimension which has gained prior importance in the civil society described by Habermas (1992) as characterized by permanent debate and the absence of consensus. While Schatz and Staub viewed these two aspects as fixed personality traits, Depuiset et al. show that constructive patriotism can vary as a function of the perceived legitimacy of the actions of the authorities. In presenting this perspective, they "de-essentialize" patriotism, and show that it should be considered not only in terms of self-definition and emotional attachment to an in-group, but as embedded in specific political relations with authorities.

Turning to the issue of a European citizenship, the paper by Sanchez-Mazas, Van Humskerken, and Casini (2003) illustrates the variety of meanings of citizenship that new bases of identification, such as Europe, or even old ones, like the nation, might entail. Precisely, the progressive replacement of "traditional" national States with supranational entities, like the European Union, combined with the increased ethnic cultural heterogeneity of modern citizenries, is another factor that renders the use of an ethnic model of citizenship obsolete. In this respect, the emergence of the EU may constitute an opportunity to implement a new view of citizenship. The article addresses some of the questionings about the notion of citizenship brought about by on recent challenges in the classical/national model of citizenship. If political commitment (*Demos*) requires a shared framework allowing the exercise of citizenship, would it only become meaningful when associated with a substantial *Ethnos*, as it has been the case hitherto with the national form of citizenship? Would adhesion to universalistic principles and democratic procedures, rather than particular cultural forms of life, suffice to ensure political involvement within a community?

In the present-day, the national model of citizenship is challenged both on a universalistic basis – e.g., with the definition of a European citizenship beyond national boundaries and the development of transnational individual rights – and a particularistic basis – with the multiplication of sub-national identities claiming specific rights (minorities, women, regions, etc.) – thus

disconnecting rights from their traditional grounds in the national space and identity (Soysal, 1994). Such a disjunction opens avenues for reconnecting political agency with multiple and new forms of identity (Isin & Wood, 1999). Many demands arising from civil society and which are currently framed in terms of citizenship do not emanate from actors defining themselves primarily as nationals. New identities and movements that cut across the old class lines now challenge the equation according to which "citizenship for all" implies "for all the same citizenship" (Young, 1998: 401).

By studying the arguments that make up contested and divergent claims to political participation amongst British Muslims, the contribution by Hopkins, Reicher and Kahani-Hopkins (2003) centers on the issue of group rights. Group rights lie at the crux of new conceptions of citizenship moving beyond the universalistic pretension based on formal equality between individuals, and which leave aside differences in life contexts, and relegate particularism to the private sphere. Clearly, with rights-claiming and political demands, identities penetrate the public sphere and redefine the framework of citizenship.

The contribution by Staerklé, Roux, Delay, Gianettoni, and Perrin (2003) is also focused on particular claims, but in the context of social rights rather than cultural rights. Their study analyses how claims to correct and compensate inequality between gender groups are received in the broader society. Here, identities are taken as *responses* to social inequality, rather than as the mere public expression of preexisting essential categorizations. Their perspective is complementary to Hopkins et al.'s work that studies the content of claims from the perspective of those who advance them.

As these papers illustrate, citizenship cannot be viewed solely as the combination of "rights" (e.g., voting, education, social security) and "obligations" (e.g., military service, taxes,...) in the context of political entities (State, municipality, Region, etc.). Nor are people's conceptions of citizenship to be viewed in strict correspondence with the predominant national model, but as shaped by the plurality of viewpoints expressed in the public sphere. Social psychology should rehabilitate in its models the critical stance and the dimensions of agency and innovation that appear to characterize social identifications when seen in the light of modern citizenship.

Citizenship, Identity, and Action

The social identity tradition (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) has very much relied on a phenomenological definition of identity, focusing on the cognitions, evaluations and emotions associated with group membership (Tajfel, 1981; see also: Turner, 1982). In

this view, group behaviour is often considered as only a consequence of this self-definition rather than as actually constructing it. Yet, identities are not only defined cognitively, they are embedded and constructed in action. Often ignored from an essentialist perspective, this constructive dimension of social identity is a recurrent theme in this special issue. Even when groups draw upon historical and religious references, they actively construct their identities around a plurality of political projects not only aiming at recognition of particularisms but also at political involvement in the broader society. These interpretations are precisely the focus of Hopkins et al.'s paper (2003) as they analyze how members of a minority group, the Muslim Community in Britain, use religious narratives to justify specific political projects in the context of British society. Their contribution highlights a crucial message: Identities are not self-evident consequences of particular social contexts but they are constructed and contested through debate in the public sphere. Their paper also illustrates the deep interconnection between identity and politics in the context of the emerging broader conceptualizations of citizenship, in which identities are constructed through claims making.

But the link between identity and action is not limited to claims making in the public sphere. Civil society is not only the sphere where individuals can freely express opinions, endorse religious beliefs of their choice, and be granted autonomy and protection against arbitrary treatment. Indeed, in the present-day, an increasing proportion of initiatives and tasks are assumed by social networks serving specific groups or by the whole collectivity. Stürmer and Kampmeier (2003) focus on a specific form of such a collective behaviour, community volunteerism, which can be considered as a response to the transformation of the "Welfare" State and calls for new forms of solidarity. Volunteering is taken as an example of *active* citizenship in the benefit of society that demands social psychological explanations, in particular in terms of social identifications with the local community.

The new forms of citizenship we have described are not only academic constructions: They penetrate civil society and take center stage in contemporary society. Undoubtedly, they are bound to elicit skepticism or even frank opposition. Several contributions to this issue shed some light on the possible forms this resistance may take. As the study reported by Sanchez-Mazas et al. (2003) illustrates, ethnic concerns are still very present in the popular conceptions of citizenship. Also, ethnicization is shown to be a means for dominant groups to deny political agency to minorities, an issue raised by Hopkins et al. (2003). More specifically, the contribution by Staerklé et al. (2003) tackles the issue of resistance towards the granting of social rights in the context of maternity policies. The authors show how claims that challenge the traditional public/private divide, articulate "unequal" rights for different social categories and assert the political dimen-

sion of "private" activities, are approved of or opposed, as a function of representations of the social order, common values, structural gender inequality and social change.

As this introduction hopefully demonstrates, this special issue on citizenship highlights the critical role of diversity, which is a feature of today's public space. Such a diversity is a matter of celebration but also often a matter of concern. In particular, when it is perceived as a fragmentation of the social body, and as entailing the loss of a sense of common interest, diversity is equated with a threat to democracy. In highlighting the constructive dimension of identities, the political agency that they convey and the disputed definitions of central notions like citizenship or patriotism, this special issue may contribute to reframing this diversity in terms of the democratic pluralism of public life rather than of the threatening emergence of essential particularisms. In so doing, the traditional antagonisms between particularism and universalism, identities and citizenship, might have a better chance to be seen in terms of dilemma rather than conflict.

This brief overview shows that the papers included in this issue also offer a diversity of approaches to the emerging issue of citizenship. Their diversity is not only theoretical but methodological as well: A survey using a representative sample (Staerklé et al.), a field study (Stürmer et al: study 1); media analysis (Hopkins et al), word associations (Sanchez-Mazas et al.), "traditional" experiments (Depuiset et al., Licata et al; Stürmer et al: study 2). This diversity is only natural given the contested and multifaceted nature of citizenship.

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