

Living Together as Equals

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Living Together as Equals

The Demands of Citizenship

Andrew Mason

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For Lynn, once again

Preface

Many of those who think that citizenship matters, not only in terms of the obvious benefits it provides but also the demands it makes on us, can't help feeling that they don't do enough. Balancing the demands of citizenship against those of parenthood, family and friendship, and against the pressures that our jobs and leisure activities exert, is a tremendous challenge and it is hard to feel that one has got that balance right. This book is intended as a partial corrective to these feelings of failure. It tries to show that we can be decent enough citizens without devoting our lives to serving the political communities to which we belong. By acting in more mundane ways in the private sphere and in civil society we can be reasonably good citizens, though greater public-spiritedness would no doubt help to make us better ones.

I couldn't have written this book without various forms of support. The Leverhulme Trust made it possible by awarding me one of their Major Research Fellowships and I owe them my warmest thanks. Although I've resisted the idea—encouraged by the practice of so-called 'Full Economic Costing'—that my period of Leverhulme-funded research leave has been subsidized by my institution, there's no doubt that my colleagues have taken on more burdens as a result of it and I'm grateful to them for not complaining. It would be stretching things too far to say that I'm looking forward to returning to the world of teaching and administration, but the thought that there is an element of reciprocity involved at least partially reconciles me to doing so.

I also have a number of particular debts of gratitude. Chris Armstrong, Roger Crisp, John Horton, David Miller, David Owen, and Shlomi Segall kindly read an earlier draft of the manuscript, as did three anonymous referees for Oxford University Press. Though no doubt there is still much wrong with it, the book has been improved a lot by their comments. I am very grateful for the help they have given me and the time and energy they devoted to doing so.

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Preface

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And, finally, I am grateful to my family—Lynn, Sam and Matthew—who have provided a welcome distraction from it all—well, most of the time the distraction has been welcome.

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Contents

Introduction	1
Part I. The Normative Foundations of Citizenship	
1. Conceptions of Citizenship	25
2. Justice and Equal Membership Accounts	55
Part II. The Practice of Citizenship: Is there . . .	
3. A Duty to Avoid State Dependency?	87
4. A Duty to Share Domestic Burdens?	105
5. A Duty not to Seek or Gain Unfair Advantages?	133
6. A Duty to Offer Only Public Reasons?	149
7. A Duty to Integrate?	169
8. A Duty to Act as a Global or Ecological Citizen?	192
Conclusion	207
<i>Bibliography</i>	213
<i>Index</i>	225

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF - FIRST PROOF, 13/2/2012, SPi

Introduction

Traditional understandings of citizenship are facing a number of challenges. Ideas of cosmopolitan and environmental citizenship have emerged in the light of concerns about global inequality and climate change, whilst new models of multicultural citizenship have been developed in response to the issues raised by immigration and the presence of national minorities. At the same time, more particular debates take place about the demands that citizenship places upon us in our everyday lives. Do we have a duty as citizens to take steps to reduce the risk of having to rely upon state benefits, including health care? Does good citizenship require that we send our children to the local school even when it performs poorly? Does a parent fail in his duty as a citizen—not just as a father, say—when he is less involved in the raising of his children than their mother? Should citizens refrain from appealing to religious reasons in public debate? Do we have duties of citizenship to minimize the size of our ecological footprints? What we need is a normative theory of citizenship that brings these issues together under a common framework rather than treating them in isolation in the way that often happens. In this book I develop such a framework, made up of a minimal core concept of citizenship together with two accounts that provide different ways of elaborating this core concept. I then employ these accounts to cast light on a range of different demands that citizenship might be thought to make upon us in our everyday lives.

1 Concept and conceptions

The minimal core concept of citizenship that I shall rely upon can be characterized in a straightforward and indeed familiar way: citizenship is a relationship in which the parties enjoy rights or entitlements within a common framework of enforcement and provision, and incur special obligations, duties or responsibilities to each other. This characterization picks out elements of

Introduction

the idea of citizenship that are central to our ordinary understanding of it, but it does not provide a sufficient condition of citizenship, nor a definition of it, since there are other relationships that also possess these features, for example, family relationships. Particular conceptions of citizenship add further elements to those contained in this characterization by giving a more precise account of what type of relationship is to count as one of citizenship, by specifying the rights, entitlements, duties and responsibilities that are to be attributed to citizens, and by explaining how these are grounded.¹

I am primarily concerned with conceptions of citizenship which construe it as a moral ideal, in effect as specifying a set of moral rights or entitlements that individuals must enjoy if they are to count as full and equal citizens, together with a set of moral obligations, duties or responsibilities that they incur in this relationship. These conceptions allow us to stand in judgement on the packages of rights and entitlements that are enshrined in the laws and constitutions of particular states, and also provide us with a basis for evaluating the behaviour of citizens: we might conclude that a person is not really a citizen in a state, or not really a full citizen, because she lacks the complete range of rights which, morally speaking, are required for full citizenship, and we might conclude that an individual is a bad citizen on the grounds that she does not fulfil her obligations as a citizen. (This is not to deny that what we classify as relationships of citizenship from a purely legal standpoint, but which fall short when judged from the perspective of a moral conception, may nevertheless have significant value, even if some or all citizens in this legal sense lack the full moral rights or entitlements that they ought to enjoy.)

In Chapter 1 I distinguish some different families to which conceptions of citizenship belong that treat it as a moral ideal. The two most important of these families I refer to as the justice account and the equal membership account. Very roughly, the justice account regards citizenship as a vehicle for delivering justice, whereas the equal membership account supposes that citizenship consists in full and equal membership of a social and political community. More precisely, according to the justice account, the rights, duties, and virtues of citizenship derive solely from the rights, duties and virtues of justice—or at least, are related in some direct or indirect way to such considerations, typically being understood as the best means of fulfilling principles of justice. In other words, the concept of justice is regarded as logically prior to that of citizenship, with the rights, duties and virtues of citizenship being parasitic on that concept. According to the equal membership account, in contrast, the rights, duties, and virtues of citizenship are grounded in an important good which I shall refer to as the good of equal membership: namely, the good realized by a social and political community the members of which have equal standing. In effect, the good of equal membership consists in the value of living together as equals in an inclusive

Introduction

community. The justice account and the equal membership account represent different families of views because they can be elaborated in different ways. Different versions of the justice account are generated by different theories of justice, whereas different versions of the equal membership account are generated by different ways of understanding the good of equal membership.

It might be argued, however, that when it is properly thought through, the equal membership account collapses into the justice account (or at least that it represents a narrow version of the justice account) because the good of equal membership is simply the good of political equality, which consists in a just distribution of political rights and opportunities. In Chapter 2 I resist this argument by various means, for example, by maintaining that if the good of equal membership involves not only political equality but also social equality, that is, treating one's fellow citizens as equals in social interactions with them in civil society and beyond, then it goes further than what justice requires; by arguing that even if versions of the justice account and of the equal membership account converge in terms of the rights, duties and virtues they underpin, they nevertheless give these rights distinctively different groundings; and by suggesting that the good of equal membership may be an organic whole with a non-instrumental value that is more than the sum of the value of its component parts.

Properly understood, however, the justice account and the equal membership account are not in competition and may complement each other. Not only are they grounded in different considerations, they also focus on partially different relationships. The standard framing assumptions of the justice account mean that it does not focus exclusively on *citizens* but instead is concerned more broadly with those living together in the same state, subject to the same set of legal, political, and economic institutions. This will include resident aliens, who possess a legal right of residence but lack the status of citizenship, as well as resident citizens. In effect the justice account and the equal membership account are concerned with overlapping but partly distinct relationships, and this provides a further reason for thinking that we do not have to choose between them. They may not always provide us with complementary perspectives on different issues, however. Sometimes the perspectives they provide come into conflict with each other, in a way that raises questions about the idea that justice always has primacy. Whatever their precise relationship in particular cases, my claim is that they each provide some illumination, and that our mapping of the terrain suffers when we neglect the perspective that is provided by the equal membership account.

But do we really need the distinction between justice and equal membership accounts that I have drawn? Could we not make do with the distinction that is commonly drawn between liberal and republican conceptions of citizenship, or the distinction between Greek and Roman models of citizenship upon

Introduction

which that between liberal and republican conceptions is to some extent founded?² Indeed, is not my distinction just another way of classifying liberal and republican conceptions? Although there are ways of making the contrast between liberal and republican views of citizenship that may seem to come close to the one I am proposing, it nevertheless has a different basis, and indeed I argue in Chapter 1 that the distinction between the justice account and the equal membership account *cuts across* that between liberal and republican views of citizenship and equips us better in understanding the demands made by citizenship.

Of course, there are several other distinctions that might be drawn between ways of thinking about citizenship. James Tully, for example, distinguishes between modern and diverse traditions, which find expression not only at the level of the state but also at the transnational or global level.³ In relation to the nation state, the modern tradition conceives of citizenship in terms of the possession of a particular set of rights and duties and their corresponding institutional preconditions. These rights are regarded as providing universal standards which can be used to assess the imperfect institutional forms that citizenship takes in practice. In contrast, the diverse tradition recognizes a multiplicity of different practices rather than a single set of standards. It conceives of citizenship as a cooperative relationship that does not require any particular institutional setting, and which may cross territorial boundaries, but which takes place in the context of relations of governance. It obtains either between the governed and their governors, or between equals exercising power together, and is oriented towards securing the enjoyment of public or civic goods, whether through (creative) use of the options available to them, or by employing strategies of negotiation or confrontation in order to expand that range of options. Although there are some similarities between the distinction I am drawing and Tully's, there are clearly differences as well, and his purposes are rather different from mine. I make no claim that my distinction is the only one that is important; how we chart the terrain of citizenship will of course depend upon the questions we are addressing. My claim is merely that the distinction between justice and equal membership accounts illuminates the demands made by citizenship. (I shall return to Tully's conception of diverse citizenship in Chapter 8, in the context of discussing the issue of whether there is a duty to act as a global or transnational citizen.)

2 The duties of citizenship

My purpose is to develop the two different accounts of citizenship I have sketched and then use them to illuminate a number of issues concerning the

Introduction

duties and responsibilities of citizenship. It has been a common complaint over the past several decades that citizens have focused too much on their rights and entitlements and not enough on their duties and responsibilities. No doubt there is some truth in this accusation, as there is likewise in the claim that political theorists have concentrated on what the state owes its citizens at the expense of what citizens owe the state or indeed each other. But at the level of political theory, at least, the idea that the responsibilities and duties of citizenship have been entirely neglected cannot be sustained. A consideration of whether we have a duty to obey the law, and if so, how it is to be justified and what are its limits, has been at the heart of much theorising about citizenship, and even when the notion of distributive justice took centre stage, it did so in the context of Rawls's theory which postulated a natural duty to support just institutions. The real debate has not been about whether citizens have any duties or responsibilities, but about their precise content, how demanding they are, and whether duties of citizenship grounded in principles of justice need to be supplemented by other duties of citizenship grounded in some other way. This book focuses on the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, not because they have been ignored but because their content and basis is still less well understood.

What sort of duties are the duties of citizenship? They are moral duties but they need not be legal duties. Indeed there are often strong reasons—sometimes principled, sometimes pragmatic—for not enforcing them. Kant believed that moral duties may be either perfect or imperfect, that is, they may be duties that require one to behave in some way on any occasion when they apply—for example, he believed that we have a perfect duty not to lie that requires us never to lie—or they may be duties to behave in some way on some occasions and/or to some extent when they apply—for example, he thought that we have an imperfect duty of charity that requires us to look after the welfare of others on some occasions and to some extent, thus allowing us some leeway to decide when and to what degree.⁴ Since imperfect duties allow the agent some choice in determining how best to fulfil them, it is hard to encode them in laws, even if we were to think that their fulfilment is sufficiently important to justify enforcing them. Many citizenship duties look as if they are imperfect duties, for example, if there is a duty to serve the political community, it would seem to be a duty to do so on some occasions and to some extent. (Civic virtue could play a crucial role in understanding how imperfect duties of this sort are fulfilled, for it can be conceived as a disposition which involves a capacity to discern what these imperfect duties require in the context of series of decisions that extends over time.)

There is room for scepticism, however, about the very existence of imperfect duties.⁵ It might be thought that all duties are perfect, and that duties which appear to be imperfect can be spelt out in a way that reveals them to be perfect,

Introduction

for example, we could spell out the Kantian duty of charity by specifying the circumstances in which we are morally required to come to the aid of those in need. This would have the benefit of being more precise and it would enable us to distinguish more readily between dutiful acts and supererogatory acts (roughly speaking, acts which it is good to perform but not wrong not to perform), which is hard to do so long as the notion of imperfect duty is in play. But even if a duty to come to the aid of others when they are in need could be translated into a perfect duty, it would be difficult to do the same for at least some of the duties of citizenship. Given the diversity of forms that even reasonably just states may take, including federal arrangements with multilevel governance as well as unitary states, it is hard to specify in anything other than highly general terms what a duty to participate politically or serve the political community would require of us, and specified in these terms it is likely that it will still have the shape of an imperfect duty.

In the light of these difficulties, a two-tier model may seem attractive: we might suppose that, at the fundamental level, the duties of citizenship are all perfect duties, but at the level of practical decision-making, they have the form of imperfect duties, and the agent has some choice in deciding how to fulfil them. For example, it might be thought that the duty to participate politically and the duty to serve one's political community are imperfect but that both are derived from the perfect duty to shoulder one's fair share of the burdens of a practice when one enjoys its benefits: in practice, the best way for each citizen to satisfy this perfect duty is for her to recognize, and conscientiously fulfil, imperfect duties to participate politically and serve her political community—and in that way 'do her bit'. But although a two-tier model of this kind seems well-equipped to explain how imperfect duties might be grounded in a perfect duty of fair play, I am not so convinced that it can be applied in the same way to duties derived from the more fundamental one to support and promote just institutions since that duty looks as if it may be irreducibly imperfect.⁶

My aim is to demonstrate that the justice account and the equal membership account each provide a valuable perspective on the duties of citizenship, whether perfect or imperfect, and that we miss something of importance if we look at this issue through only one lens. I focus in particular on the following questions: whether citizens have a duty not to become dependent on the state in so far as they can avoid doing so (Chapter 3); whether they have a duty to take a share of domestic burdens, including a duty to be equally involved in raising their children (Chapter 4); whether they have a duty not to seek or gain unfair advantages (Chapter 5); whether they have a duty to offer only public reasons in public debate (Chapter 6); whether they have a duty to integrate with other cultural, religious or ethnic groups (Chapter 7); whether they have a duty as 'ecological citizens' to ensure that their environmental

Introduction

footprints are sustainable, and more generally whether they have a duty to act as global citizens (Chapter 8).

Some of these duties have received less attention in the literature on citizenship than others that I do not discuss in the same depth, such as the duty to obey the law, the duty to participate politically, and the duty to serve the political community. Although I make some remarks about these other duties, particularly in Chapter 1 where I use them to illustrate various points, I do not devote whole chapters to their exploration. I do not deny their importance, but the way in which the justice account and the equal membership accounts bears upon them is more obvious and they are already better understood.⁷ With the exception of Chapter 6 (which discusses the issue of whether we have a duty to give only public reasons in public debate), I have also chosen to focus on what might be called ‘everyday citizenship’. By ‘everyday citizenship’, I mean the low-level decisions that we make in the course of our everyday lives that, on reflection, our duties of citizenship might be thought to bear upon—such as the decisions people take about where to live, where to send their children to school, whether to lead healthy lifestyles, whether to use their personal connections in seeking advantages for their children, what share of domestic burdens to shoulder—and which in practice in liberal-democratic societies have often been treated as of merely private significance, at least when they do not involve any law-breaking.

The duty to avoid state dependency

The question of whether citizens have an unconditional entitlement to welfare benefits and health care is the main context in which the debate about rights and responsibilities has taken place. One way in which it might seem that we can steer a path through this debate, neither denying such an entitlement nor the responsibility of the citizen, is to argue that citizens have a duty to avoid becoming dependent upon state aid, including perhaps a duty to lead a healthy life so that they reduce the demands that they place upon the state, including its health-care provision. Whether such a position is available to us, however, is complex, and the justice and equal membership accounts provide us with different perspectives on the issue. From the perspective of the justice account this issue is inextricably bound up with the question of whether justice requires people to bear the costs of their choices. If it does, then it may seem a short distance from here to the conclusion that citizens have a duty to avoid becoming dependent upon state aid. But I shall argue that things are not that simple. If the entitlement to state benefits is conditional upon not being responsible for one’s inability to meet one’s own needs, then there is little, if any space, for a citizen’s duty to avoid becoming dependent upon the state: either one cannot avoid doing so, in which case such a duty

Introduction

would be irrelevant, or one becomes dependent in a way that is a foreseeable and avoidable consequence of one's own choices, in which case one has no entitlement to state aid. This dilemma does not exhaust the range of possible positions, however. Even though it is hard to deny that responsibility for an outcome makes a difference to a person's entitlements, there are a number of different possible positions on the precise effect that responsibility for one's predicament makes to one's entitlement to state aid, some of which can make space for the idea that citizens are under a duty to avoid becoming dependent upon it.

The issues here look rather different from the perspective of the equal membership account, for it seems to involve an unconditional commitment to meeting each citizen's needs in so far as this is required in order to provide them with equal opportunity to participate on equal terms in social and political life. Indeed, the justice account and the equal membership account potentially conflict in this context, raising the question of whether the good of equal membership may sometimes legitimately take priority over considerations of justice. If it may legitimately take priority, then there is room for a justification of a duty to avoid state dependency even if we were to suppose that there is no reason of justice to help a person who is responsible for his or her own needs—and indeed even if we were to suppose that it would be unjust to force others to do so through taxation.

The duty to share domestic burdens

Feminists have sought to re-chart the terrain of citizenship. One of the crucial issues in this context is the place of unpaid care work, especially that which is involved in the raising of children, in our understanding of citizenship. If we endorse a principle of reciprocity which holds that citizens are justified in receiving state benefits only if they have made a contribution to society when they had the opportunity to do so, then we can allow that the performance of unpaid care work enables a citizen to satisfy this requirement.⁸ Reflecting upon these issues from the perspective of the justice account, we might also think that each parent has a duty of citizenship to take a fair share of the work associated with raising their children, grounded in principles of justice which govern the distribution of domestic burdens. This is more problematic than it might appear, however, and there are a number of sources of resistance to the idea that principles of distributive justice apply to domestic burdens. For example, it might be thought that if we are truly to respect moral and religious pluralism, we have to allow different family units to organize their domestic lives in accordance with their own moral and religious doctrines, which may involve particular views about the proper role of men and women and the distribution of domestic burdens between them. I shall consider a variety of

Introduction

different reasons for resisting the application of principles of distributive justice to domestic burdens, but I argue that none of them are persuasive.

It is not clear, however, that the principles of justice appropriate in this context entail that mothers and fathers have a duty to be share the burdens of childcare *equally*. These principles may, for example, permit burdens that are experienced as a result of performing paid work for others to offset burdens shouldered whilst performing unpaid domestic work. Formulating precise principles to govern the division of domestic burdens is challenging and it may be that the best we can hope for is a requirement that each parent does their bit, seen as an imperfect duty. (This imperfect duty might perhaps be understood as derived from a perfect duty that requires us to take on our fair share of these burdens.) I argue that, on various assumptions at least, it can properly be conceived as a duty of *citizenship* as opposed to a duty owed to one's co-parent.

Many versions of the justice account will require the parents of a child to bear the lion's share of the burdens of raising him or her, on the grounds that parents choose to have their children (or, at least, that their children are a foreseeable consequence of their sexual activity) so should bear the costs of doing so. One of these costs, however, may be that while their children are young they do not have the same opportunities as non-parents (or parents of older children) to participate fully in the social and political life of the polity. But if honouring the good of equal membership involves an unconditional commitment to providing each citizen with an equal opportunity to participate on equal terms in the political sphere and in civil society, an equal membership account may not be so sanguine about the effects of the burdens of caring for young children. The tension between the justice account and the equal membership account in this context may be partially resolved, however, by supposing that each parent has a *pro tanto* duty of citizenship to take an equal share of the burdens of raising their children should the other desire to reduce their greater share, and that employers have a duty to provide flexible work arrangements for their employees so that they are able to engage in equal parenting, in so far as employers can do so in a way that is relatively costless. Even if having the opportunity for equal parenting does not mean that parents of young children will have an opportunity equal to others in their society to participate in social and political life, it does involve a movement in the direction of greater equality of opportunity in this respect.

The duty not to seek or gain unfair advantages

The justice account maintains that citizens are under a duty to support and to further reasonably just laws and institutions. But even in a society whose basic institutions and laws were perfectly just, there would be scope for individuals

Introduction

to act unjustly, to seek an unfair share of benefits or advantages for themselves, or for their friends or relations. This is not merely a practical problem with devising institutions, laws and policies so that they deter such behaviour or punish it when it occurs. It is a deeper problem because there are many instances where we think it desirable to allow people the liberty to act unjustly. For example, we may think it is important to permit private education because it allows parents to choose schools for their children with a particular educational philosophy or distinctive curriculum, even though we know that some of these schools will undermine equality of opportunity by giving their pupils unfair advantages in the competition for jobs or elite higher education. We also know that some parents will choose these schools for their child to give him competitive advantages rather than because of their conception of what constitutes an intrinsically valuable education, yet arguably such behaviour violates a duty not to seek or gain unfair advantage for oneself or others

The idea that there is a duty not to seek unfair advantages for oneself or for others is most at home within a justice account of citizenship; there is no interestingly different ‘equal membership’ account perspective on it. If there is such a duty, what it implies will depend upon what constitutes an unfair advantage, and this will be determined by our best theory of justice. I shall assume that justice requires us to counteract the effects of differences in people’s ‘unchosen’ circumstances, but I shall not presuppose any particular view of what that involves. Instead I shall draw out the implications of two broadly different approaches, which I call the neutralization approach and the mitigation approach.

The duty to give only public reasons

Many liberal theorists have argued that citizens have a duty to exercise self-restraint in public debate by offering only public reasons for the laws and policies they favour, at least when these involve matters of basic justice. Often they defend this position from within a justice account by appealing to a notion of legitimacy. I argue that this approach is unpromising, however. Even if political principles can be legitimate only if they are acceptable to all, this does not rule out the possibility that principles may be legitimate if they are endorsed by different citizens for different ‘private’ reasons. If they can be legitimate even when they are endorsed for different private reasons, why limit public debate to the giving of only public reasons? Other ways of tying the giving of public reasons to the legitimate exercise of political power run into related difficulties.

The idea that citizens have a duty to give only public reasons in public debate is also sometimes defended by an appeal to the importance of respect

Introduction

for one's fellow citizens, or by appeal to what it is to be reasonable. The first of these arguments is most at home within an equal membership account. Both face a number of problems, however. For it would seem that we can respect our fellow citizens whilst, for example, giving religious reasons that they do not share, so long as we are not dismissive of them and do not ridicule their arguments. We may also be reasonable whilst offering such reasons so long as we give due weight to the burdens of judgements and do not seek to justify laws and policies which would require others to conform to religious doctrines that they can reasonably reject.

The duty to integrate

A number of governments in Europe and elsewhere have declared that immigrants have a duty to integrate. They have grounded this duty in the importance of social (or community) cohesion for the stability of social institutions. From the perspective of justice accounts, this duty is best understood as deriving from a duty to support just institutions. If the achievement and stability of reasonably just institutions depends upon social cohesion, and social cohesion depends upon integration, then there would be a basis for the idea that citizens are under a duty to integrate. An argument of this sort relies upon empirical evidence. But before we can even determine whether the evidence supports it, we need some clarity concerning the concepts of social cohesion and integration, and what empirical hypotheses are being entertained in relation to them. When we probe further, it seems that the idea of integration is often associated with two rather different ideas that bear very little relation to each other. First, the idea of members of different groups leading more of their lives together in what we might call 'meaningful interaction', and second, the idea of sharing a national identity. Weaker and stronger claims are then possible about the connection between each of these phenomena and the cultivation and maintenance of reasonably just institutions. Is it being claimed that a shared national identity is a necessary condition for the achievement and stability of reasonably just institutions, or more weakly, that a shared national identity tends to make these institutions easier to achieve, and more stable and enduring? And if it is being claimed that meaningful interaction is a necessary condition for the creation and maintenance of these institutions, then we need to know what level or intensity of interaction is required. I argue that when levels of trust are sufficiently low to threaten the viability of reasonably just institutions, the connection between meaningful interaction and mutual trust may be able to underpin a duty to integrate that binds the majority as well as minorities, and that requires both to make different choices about where they live or where they send their children to school. Under these circumstances, there may also be

Introduction

scope to defend some specific duties, for example, a duty that requires immigrants to learn the language of the society they have joined, and a duty that requires parents to send their children to schools that are diverse in terms of religion, culture and ethnicity when they have the choice.

The equal membership account has a potentially different perspective on these issues. It may suppose that lack of integration, or different cultural groups leading ‘parallel lives’ within the same society, is a product of a failure of social equality, that is, a failure of citizens to treat each other as equals, often as a result of racial prejudice which lies behind behaviour which, even if it is not unjust, leads to a separation between different groups. For example, as a result of such prejudice a couple might decide not to buy a house in a neighbourhood that has a high proportion of members of an ethnic minority living there, or decide not to send their son to the local school because it has a high proportion of children from that minority, or decide not to allow him to play with children in the neighbourhood from it. If these patterns of behaviour are reproduced across a society, then different groups will lead different lives within the same society. Even if the prejudiced forms of behaviour that generate a lack of integration are not unjust, it may be possible to justify a duty to integrate that bears primarily on those behaving in this way, especially when lack of integration causes minorities to suffer from various forms of disadvantage.

The duty to act as a global or ecological citizen

The idea that a person may be in a relationship of citizenship to others who live beyond the borders of the state to which she belongs, even when they are not all subject to any common political authority, has gained momentum over the past decade or so. It is implicit in the contention that each of us owes a duty of ecological citizenship, to those in the developing world who bear the brunt of climate change, to reduce our environmental footprints to a sustainable size by making different choices in our everyday lives, and it is implicit in the contention that we owe duties of global citizenship to those who live in grinding poverty to help them raise their standards of living. But even if these duties are properly regarded as duties of justice, it is not clear that a justice account can legitimately characterize them as duties of ecological or global *citizenship*. This is not simply because citizenship is about the enjoyment of rights as well as the incurring of duties, though that might make one worry about extending the relationship of citizenship into contexts where there is no common political authority to protect rights. It is also because it is part of the core concept of citizenship that the duties of citizenship are special duties which fellow citizens owe to each other as part of that relationship. In their standard form, these duties emerge from the fact that one is subject to the

Introduction

same social, political and economic institutions, or part of a cooperative scheme for mutual advantage, or part of a scheme that is in place to facilitate mutual aid. In the absence of some background such as this, it is hard to see how any duties that are owed as part of justice can be construed as special duties that fellow citizens owe to each other. This is not to say that notions of global or transnational citizenship are unintelligible in the absence of global or transnational political institutions. They can gain a foothold where agents act together across state borders in a way that creates associative obligations between them: in these cases even if they do not enjoy rights through the protection of transnational institutions, the fact that they incur duties to one another to promote various civic and public goods at least gives the language of citizenship a foothold.

3 Essentialism

The core concept of citizenship to which I appeal is flexible and accommodating, perhaps more so than it may initially appear. According to it, citizenship is a relationship in which the parties enjoy rights or entitlements within a common framework of enforcement and provision, and incur special obligations, duties or responsibilities to each other. This allows the possibility that the obligations of citizenship extend to what is conventionally regarded as the private sphere and include obligations to perform one's fair share of domestic labour, such as the work involved in caring for children and other dependants. It also allows the possibility that equal citizenship for all may require group differentiated rights that give different packages of rights to different groups of citizens, perhaps distinguished in terms of culture or ethnicity.⁹ As I have already suggested, however, it does run counter to conceptions of citizenship which maintain that people can lie in a relationship of global or transnational citizenship *simply* through sharing obligations of justice to those in poverty beyond the borders of the states in which they live, in the absence of anything else that connects them, and indeed in the absence of any common framework of rights protection. Indeed I appeal to the core concept of citizenship to cast doubt on these new usages of the term. But an approach which adheres to the idea that there is such a core concept, no matter how minimal, will strike many as fundamentally misguided, especially when it is applied as a break on new ways of thinking about citizenship.

Those influenced by Wittgenstein's later work may resist the idea that there is a core concept of citizenship by arguing that there is a variety of different uses of the term with nothing that unifies them, and will be inclined to think that the approach I favour involves an objectionable form of essentialism.¹⁰ In a well-known passage in the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein points

We hope you have enjoyed this short preview. Living together as equals: The demands of citizenship by Andrew Mason can be purchased from Amazon here:

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