Approaches to Global Citizenship

Liberal and Democratic modes of global citizenship

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Abstract of the Presentation on March 20th

The aim of the presentation is to describe two different yet overlapping modes of global citizenship. They have different names in different disciplines, such as civil and civic global citizenship, cosmopolitan and plural citizenship, hegemonic and citizenship from below, global and glocal, institution-based and practice-based, mainstream and radical. I call them liberal and democratic global citizenship, as these terms best reflect the respective traditions from which they derive. Both modalities of citizenship share the general norm of the liberal tradition, the rule of law, and the general norm of the democratic tradition, popular sovereignty, yet they interpret and co-ordinate these two norms differently.

Part I briefly describes liberal global citizenship. Since liberal global citizenship is more familiar, in its neo-liberal or cosmopolitan form, I then set it aside and concentrate on the democratic mode. Part II sets out the defining features of democratic global citizenship. Part III compares the different relationships of liberal and democratic global citizenship to representative institutions. Part IV examines how democratic global citizenship relates to the human rights of the UN Declaration and the Covenants. Part V investigates how well the democratic approach addresses the central worry that global citizenship-from-below activists have with liberal global citizenisation or democratisation: that it institutes a subjectifying and disempowering form of low intensity democracy (in A. Anghie’s & B. de Sousa Santos’ sense). Part VI examines the distinctive way that democratic global citizenship relates to the law: namely, how it moves from non-law to transnational law (in G. Teubner’s & P. Zumbansen’s sense).

The presentation is based on the two Background Papers that I sent for preliminary reading. They are based on ‘On Local and Global Citizenship’ in Imperialism and Civic Freedom, Volume II of Public Philosophy in a New Key, Cambridge 2008, pp.243-311, and on ‘On the Multiplicity of Global Public Spheres’ forthcoming in C. Emden, ed. Changing Perceptions of the Public Sphere, 2009 (available on request). The presentation concentrates almost exclusively on the ‘civic’ and ‘democratic’ tradition sections of the Background Papers and of ‘On Local and Global Citizenship’ (ss.4-5) and on the ‘democratic’ sections of ‘On the Global Multiplicity of Public Spheres’ (ss.3-5).

Parts III-VI of the presentation draw out and clarify themes that are mentioned but not discussed in detail in the civic and democratic sections of the Background Papers.