GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP: ONE, TWO OR MANY CONCEPT(S)?

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ABSTRACT

The balance of accuracy and precision is important in the task of concept formation. When a concept contains many sub-concepts the challenge becomes to balance the precision aspects at all fronts of sub-concept formation. Being precise on one sub-concept level at the expense of others leads to conceptual fallacy. The notion of Global citizenship faces the similar kind of dilemmas.

Keywords: Citizenship, Global Citizenship, Accuracy, Precision, Uncertainty, Democracy

I

Citizenship as a ‘contested’ concept has remained a central initiation point in the academic discourses on citizenship. Scholarly works on citizenship do not avoid taking such an initiation point. It seems, virtually, taking such initiation point and becoming scholars are synonymous to each other. Earlier notion of relating citizenship with sovereignty, nationality and territoriality has not gone unchallenged. Last three decades have shown the assertion of various notion(s) of citizenship, namely, ‘cosmopolitan citizenship’¹, ‘world citizenship’², ‘Transnational citizenship’³, ‘urban citizenship’⁴, ‘local citizenship’⁵, ‘insurgent citizenship’⁶, ‘cultural citizenship’⁷, ‘multicultural citizenship’⁸, ‘ecological citizenship’⁹, ‘sexual citizenship’¹⁰.

European citizenship and many others. In brief, we have differential notion of citizenship today which float under the assumption that no single notion explains the whole. In a certain sense, one might argue that this is the case of fragmentation in the notion of citizenship and it obviously prevents people to organize society in a genius way. Now the next point which comes to be analyzed is whether this fragmentation in the notion of citizenship is a challenge before citizenship or it is advantageous to the same. The common assumption sees it a challenge, but several scholars, activists, politicians are also not immune from this notion. Against these common notions, many scholars have asserted that being differential and anti-symmetrical is the strength of conceptual tool and its subject of study. Meanwhile, my aim in the essay is not to assert the strengths or virtues of challenging the hegemonic concept(s). A lot have already been written about. My aim is to understand how does or does the conceptual mix-up take place when the hegemonic concept(s) is/are challenged and the sub-concept(s) is/are formed? In addition, the essay also intends to enquire the consequences of sub-concept formation over the essence of parent concept. The concept of citizenship has been conceptualized in numerous ways and dealing with all would not be possible in this short essay, so I will be focusing on the concept “Global Citizenship”. Through the concept of global citizenship the essay would like to enquire: how does the sub-concept ‘global citizenship’ conceptualizes the core essence of concept

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12 Pregs Govender, deputy chair of the South African Human Right Commission (SAHRC), expressed the same apprehension about fragmentation (in the context of human rights and the associated movements) in a talk on “Human Rights in an Unequal World: Accountability to People who are Poor” in the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance (CSLG), JNU, Delhi. Though she was talking about human rights, but her apprehension about fragmentation could be important to understand the challenges or advantages to the deployment of differentiation in the notion of citizenship. Whether fragmentation is good or bad, challenges or advantages depends on how one frame the question and the exploratory or intended aim of the question. If the aim is to construct people’s experiences in an abstract way, fragmentation is obviously a challenge to it. On the other hand, if the aim is to deconstruct the abstract notion of people’s experiences fragmentation is a boon to it. In the latter case, the aim is to harmonize people’s differential experiences not through relegating the differences but by synchronizing differences through the tool of what John Rawls called ‘Reflective Equilibrium’. Fragmentation is also a boon in some other sense. The same difference does not have equal chance of articulation in different locations/spheres. The same women’s issues get articulated through political and electoral domain in South Africa, but the case is quite different for India. In India, women’s issues have seen the high chance of articulation through judicial-bureaucratic domain than the electoral-political domain. In brief, the same issues, if get articulated through different arenas/domains, require different logic of articulations, different strategies and the different mode of interactions, even though the abstract aim remains the same. Thus, differential imaginations of citizenship are not the vices even though it might be the hindrances for highly cherished policy makers.
‘citizenship’, how does the incorporation of other concepts i.e. democracy in the global citizenship impacts the conceptual boundary of the latter and how does, in turn, it compromises the essence of parent concept. The next section will intend to present the errors/limitations of contemporary approaches in drawing sub-concepts from parent concept. The third section will start with the conceptual evolution of citizenship as a concept and the new notion of global citizenship. It will also discuss the divergent debates in the conceptual periphery of global citizenship. The last section will conclude with the discussion of limitations of conceptual methodology in the debates of global citizenship and will mention the probable way forward.

II

There has been a long debate about relation between science and non-science or social science. Its history can be traced from the time of positivists to post-positivist till present. I do not want to engage in the debate of science and non-science. My only aim is to take certain motivational directions from science to evaluate the few aspects of social science. In the field of science, particularly the measurement, accuracy and precision bear the important position. Accuracy in a measurement refers to the degree of closeness of the measured quantity x to the quantity’s true value X. On the other hand, Precision of a measurement system refers to the degree to which repeated measurements under same conditions show the same results. In short, precision is related to repeatability and reproducibility.

A measurement system can have four aspects: first, it can be accurate but not precise; second, it can be precise but not accurate; third, it can be neither and fourth, it can be both. For instance - if any experiment has systematic error, precision can be improved by expanding the sample size but it cannot make the measurement more accurate. On the other hand, if we eliminate systematic error it will increase the accuracy but the precision will not change.

How does this understanding of accuracy and precision help us to understand the conceptual boundaries of a new concept and the location of the same in the social science? To understand this one has to, first, look into the limitations of framework of accuracy and precision in the social science. Accuracy and precision of a measurement system is relatively easier to know as we have true value of the quantity against which the case of accuracy and precision has been attempted to calculate. In social science, on the other hand, we do not know the true or actual boundaries of a concept i.e. citizenship, as the concept is itself a contested one. If this is so, how can the framework of accuracy and precision will be helpful for the larger understanding of my purpose.

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In social science, the framework of accuracy and precision is not used in the same way as in natural sciences. The intent to be more accurate and precise or one of them in concept formation becomes the dominant intent in social science even in the absence of agreement over true or actual conceptual boundary of a concept. The differential notion in the citizenship understandings i.e. urban, local, trans-national, sexual, multicultural citizenship and the many others is the prime evidence which captures the concern of being accurate or precise but none the both in the sub-concept formation. The sub-concept I am dealing in this essay, global citizenship, shows the extreme sign of precision but remains silent on the issue of accuracy in its conceptual understandings. It broadens the sample to be verified but the conceptual blurring it deploys tries to destroy the basic essence of citizenship as such. Precision is not the only justificatory boundaries of conceptual imaginations; rather it should be complimentary with the accuracy aspects of the same. The detail discussions of precision and accuracy dilemma of the concept global citizenship will be discussed in the next section. For the moment let me come to the limitations of over-reliance on precision aspects.

Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, in quantum mechanics, has one important lesson to teach for our project irrespective of its some of its principles/assumptions have come under heavy challenges in last three decades. Uncertainty principle, generally, asserts the limit to the precision with which two complementary variables i.e. positions and momentum of a particle can be known simultaneously. Werner Heisenberg, a German physicist, argued that the more precisely the position of some particle is determined, the less precisely its momentum can be known, and vice-versa\textsuperscript{15}. How are the arguments and assumptions of uncertainty principle important for our understanding of the themes of this essay? Global citizenship is sub-concept of parent concept ‘citizenship’. Concept of global citizenship permutes essences of two major concepts ‘global’ and ‘citizenship’. It tries to challenge the earlier notion of relationship of citizenship with territoriality. Global aspects assimilate the theme of democracy and other necessary virtues and try to imagine world in rather new and harmonious way. One important question which comes now is: whether paying more attention to the precision aspects of ‘global’ pushes theorists to be less precise, even though unintentionally, on the ‘citizenship’ aspects, and the vice-versa? Is it because, if this so, of the limitations of the conceptual framework deployed by theorists or is it inevitable as in the discipline of science? Where does the failure arise in conceptual imaginations? Are there any competing answers for the same? Can there be any framework accurate and precise both, at the same time? All these questions will be the subject of discussion in the next section followed by the way forward in the final section.

III

Citizenship debates have long historical trajectory. A rich debate can be peeped into the Greek-City times and since then. Aristotle associated the status of ‘citizens’ with those, in person, who share in the holding of office\textsuperscript{16}. Citizens, for Aristotle, were those who actively participated in the activities of polis and participated in the deliberation of all activities of the same. Political agency, in Aristotle’s society, was an important factor which a person was supposed to have to be the citizen of Greek City-States. The notion of citizenship got its new imagination in the time of Roman Empire. It was narrower, but more practical and efficient than the Greeks. In this period citizenship acquired its legal meaning by shedding the political connotations of Greek times. Citizens, now, were not only those who actively participated in the political process of polis or those who took part in deliberation and decision-making, but those who obeyed common law irrespective of theirs territorial affiliations\textsuperscript{17}. Inclusivity of Roman citizenship was clearly an advance over the Greeks. The former tried to address the exclusiveness of the latter (political citizenship) by conceptualizing citizenship in the legal form. Nonetheless, Roman’s were an advancement over Greeks but the former shed the Greek’s imagination of citizens in active form and conceptualized citizens in more passive form. Contrarily to Greek’s (who emphasized on the duties of citizens in relation to state), Early Modern political thinkers i.e. Hobbes, Spinoza and Locke emphasized on the rights and obligations of citizens with respect to state. Pufendorf saw the role of citizenship in converting the moral duties and obligations of people in pre-civil condition to its legal connotation where people got assurance from the sovereign. Hegel echoes Pufendorf and sees cosmopolitanism as a threat to sovereign state. In modern times the earlier notions of citizenship have not been pushed aside but have experienced a shift in the subject of analysis. Focus has now shifted to the social structural asymmetry which has impeded the realization of formal rights of citizens\textsuperscript{18}. In his seminal essay “Citizenship and Social Class”, T. H. Marshall linked citizenship to legal status which accorded identical set of rights i.e. civil, political and social to all members of political community\textsuperscript{19}. Marshall saw the role of citizenship in containing the class conflict. Marshall’s thesis, in 1980s, came under heavy criticism by young generation scholars. I. M. Young expressed doubt over the capacity of citizenship in the formation of civic integration through the transcendence of ‘difference’\textsuperscript{20}. She saw the thesis of transcendence of particularity as concealing the cultural hegemony of majority over minority.


According to her, a political community needs to accord differential treatment to its members and show tolerance to the pluralistic notion of social arrangements including the positive recognition of special rights of minorities\(^{21}\). Theorists of Differential Citizenship are optimistic of constructing a common polity and its practices through maintaining dialogues across differences\(^{22}\). In a similar vein, the argument of ‘public reasonableness’ imagines people having the ability and intention to listen to others and formulating own viewpoints in a sensitive way to the experiences of others\(^{23}\). Kymlicka, also, argues for the inclusion of minorities and disadvantaged groups in a nation-state by positively recognizing theirs three kinds of demands/rights: self-government, multicultural and special representation rights\(^{24}\).

The above literatures on citizenship conceptualize citizenship either as political practices or as a function of integration. Surprisingly, these literatures assume, and many explicitly demonstrate, the inevitable association of citizenship with nationality. While associating citizenship with nationality, these literatures assumed the functional dependency of integrative aspects of citizenship over the prior presence of common nationality. They assumed and associated citizenship within the conceptual boundaries of sovereignty, shared nationality and the territoriality. Critics, on the other hand, have refused to recognize the prior presence of common national identity as the determining and ultimate source of allegiance. Critics have also challenged the basic premises of these literatures. A proliferation of several notions of citizenship have come in the recent decades i.e. multicultural citizenship, global citizenship, local citizenship, trans-national citizenship, European citizenship, Cosmopolitan citizenship and many others. Whatever have been the impacts of this proliferation, one important aspect is that it challenged the basic, easy and infallible causality between citizenship and bounded territorial political community. Globalization, as a process, have exhibited and asserted the porousness of territorial boundaries of nation-state and strongly problematized this easy established causality.

Many thinkers objected the causality of citizenship and shared national territory and advocated for single world government for the whole human race. Some of them argued for enlargement of boundaries of political community, and hence inclusionary aspects of political community. In different fashion, some others argued for expansion of moral boundaries of human community, not the only political. For them notion of human community should get preference over the political community in social arrangements. Immanuel Kant argued in the favor of cosmopolitan

\(^{21}\) Ibid.,

\(^{22}\) Ibid.,


form of citizenship. In the book *Perpetual Peace* Kant argued for cosmopolitan citizenship which required the arrangement of world society on the deep moral concerns of human beings. This arrangement is supposed to be based on the logic in which citizens of different states transcend their particularity and interacts with others in comparatively more universal moral forms. Sovereignty in this arrangement was supposed to reside in the whole human race. Kant’s cosmopolitan citizenship should not be confused with the fact that it requires people to give up their national-territorial affiliation and the membership of bounded political community. Rather, it gives each and every citizen of the bounded political community to rightfully retain the status of sovereign and secure liberty/non-interference from external interventions. Kant’s notion of cosmopolitan citizenship is a dialogic conception of citizenship in which the whole humanity is not the co-legislatures in the universal kingdom of ends. Citizens and aliens do not possess the same positions in Kant’s project.

Kant’s theory of cosmopolitanism was extended by Bohman but by the rejection of Kant’s idea of nation-state retaining the sovereign status. For Bohman this is the pluralistic world and the cosmopolitan order should be shaped by the public opinion. Kant’s idea of cosmopolitanism is based on the assumption of public reason and Bohman reinterprets the whole theme within the functionality of dialogue. Public reason aspect of Kant’s cosmopolitanism demands dialogic interactions, which of course will be undertaken by the intellectuals only. In this sense Kant’s idea becomes exclusionary in certain sense, at least for non-intellectuals. Bohman’s aim is to add the ingredients of plurality in dialogic arrangements, for enriching the democracy. Equal position of people at all levels of interactions, for decision-making, become important aim in Bohman’s thesis. Bohman’s thesis requires a pluralistic public sphere, where people will possess equal capacity and position to participate in interactions, at all levels of interactions i.e. within states, at different levels within a state as well as across the states.

Contrary to Bohman, David Held interprets Kant’s notion of cosmopolitan citizenship in more sympathetic way. David Held also does not see the virtues of cosmopolitan citizenship as the virtues of one super-state. He does not think that cosmopolitan form of citizenship requires the vanishing of nation-state. To him, the intra-state democracy does not necessarily lead to inter-state democracy or the democracy at the global level. He sees the importance of democratic as

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29 Ibid.
well as accountable representative institutions at the global level to check conflicts at the global levels and simultaneous strengthening of democratic cosmopolitan law.

Several theorists have questioned the possibility, necessity and desirability of cosmopolitan or trans-national form of citizenship. David Miller has objected the possibility of citizenship on the basis of shared norms and ideas. He says that world citizenship do not have strengths of guaranteeing rights and strength of enforcing responsibilities in a similar way as nation-states. He contrasts ancient period with the modern ones and comes to the conclusion that in modern times ‘politics’ has become less relevant option to construct loyalty among people and hence the ‘politics’ is not the sufficient option to arrange society at meta-state level. Stephen Neffe, unlike Miller, does not see the impossible aspects of global citizenship rather the undesirable aspects. To Neffe, the idea of global citizenship is based on the notion of vanishing of national sovereignty. So, any such arrangement would demand a lot of costs to national sovereignty and would reduce international system into ‘soulless despotism’ of world government. Some other scholars see the notion of global citizenship as a deliberate attempt of West to impose imperialism on the rest of world in the egalitarian language of citizenship. Some others see the voluntary and indeterminate notion of duties to the whole humanity becomes the basis of arguments of world citizenship but remain silent over their institutionalization at the same level. Turner initiates an important debate by claiming that the global form of capitalism as a system of finance and production has not produced the category of global citizens but the cosmopolitan citizens.

Citizenship as the basis of human rights becomes the starting point for Engin F. Isin and Bryan S. Turner and they inquire the potentiality of global citizenship to carry the combinational notion of both the human and citizenship rights. They saw citizenship as expressing the reciprocity of rights & obligations, non-reciprocity of rights & territory. So, they saw citizenship being associated with the state and its institutions and hence expressed doubts over the possibility of global citizenship or the citizenship becoming global. They did not strictly located citizenship

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with territoriality and the state but argued that it is only through institutions and institutional practices citizenship can move beyond the state, not through the legality. So they argued for replacing the notion of ‘global citizenship’ with the ‘cosmopolitan citizenship’. They recognize the presence of several international institutions and accords and arrangements which places the set of rights and obligations over the actors and hence influence the decision-making. This does not mean they are talking about the possibility of global or world citizenship rather how the rights and responsibilities will be institutionalized without appealing the ‘global’ state.  

Against the critic of notion of world and global citizenship several theorists have strongly argued for global or trans-national citizenship in the changing international contexts. They see the presence of economic globalization and argues that the same presence have forced people to move beyond the question of possibility or desirability of it. According to them, the new challenge today is whether the notion of global citizenship should be provided with a suitable conceptual perimeter or should it be left to the market to decide the same. According to Habermas, we are already living in the age of ‘post-national constellation’ of transnational citizenship in which the bounded form of citizenship is becoming less important and appropriate to the current situations. Benhabib, along with Habermas, argues in favor of transnational form of discursive democracy in the age of economic globalization. According to Habermas, democracy must contain the notion of accountability and voice and must go beyond the simpler association of democracy with franchise, elections and representation. Aspects of accountability and voice requires that citizens must have enough means to shape the policies, rules and decisions which shape people’s lives at all levels of interaction i.e. local, national and supranational levels. Habermas’s form of democracy is discursive democracy which shifts its locus from institutions to civil society. It delinks the citizenship from the bounded community and places with ‘post-national constellation’, and in this way it formulates a new meaning of popular sovereignty. Benhabib also sees the possibilities of multiple democratic ‘iterations’ in between the democratic national legislation and international law under the requirement that citizenship should be delinked from territoriality. Role of multiple democratic ‘iterations’ is to create spaces for deployment and articulation of democratic voices which would ultimately lead to the birth of trans-national and sub-national mode of citizenship. In this way both these authors do not seek to become overdependence on civil society, but the new way of doing politics.

36 Ibid.,
A brief review of literatures on ‘Global Citizenship’ give us an important starting point to analyze how the dilemma of accuracy and precision impedes throughout the literatures. Not only this, these literatures also show the dilemma of precisions itself when the concept of global citizenship associates too many concepts within itself. Thesis of Habermas and Benhabib clearly shows the accumulation of too many concepts within the ambit of global citizenship. In their attempts to become more precise on the global aspects and its associated virtues they automatically become less precise on the concept of citizenship. Both the concepts, at different junctures in the thesis, become means to each other. It becomes unclear whether democracy requires citizenship or the reconfiguration of it or the vice-versa. The main tasks before theorists of global citizenship are to develop precise conceptual boundaries of several concepts in the notional framework of global citizenship. The second challenge before them is to be balanced in their very activity of being precise over different sub-concepts. Being precise over one form of sub-concepts should not let them be less precise over different sub-concepts. The third challenge is to make a balance between the accuracy as well as precision aspects of conceptual engagement. Expanding the sample should not be at the cost of conceptual formation.