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The Affective Dimension of Citizenship: A Platonic Account

Emma Cohen de Lara

Contemporary literature on citizenship tends to define citizenship as rights-based, that is, as political membership by means of which one is entitled to certain civic, social, and political rights. This chapter aims to explore the meaning of citizenship while focusing on the affective dimension of citizenship and conceptualizes the affective dimension by re-appropriating insights from Plato's dialogue *The Laws*. Ancient philosophy continues to inspire modern theories of politics and citizenship but a re-appropriation of Plato instead of Aristotle is unconventional. And yet, so this chapter argues, Plato provides an interesting resource. *The Laws* provides the reader with a psychology of the members of the polity including the emotional dispositions that develop in shared group practices. The dialogue proposes that being a member of a political community means that one has internalized the laws of the political community both on a cognitive and emotional level. Following an analysis of the original text, the chapter explores some of the conceptual problems that the development of the affective dimension of citizenship runs into when different levels of governance are taken into account.

Keywords: citizenship, Plato, affective bonds, constitutional patriotism, political community

This chapter proposes that theories of citizenship need to take into account the affective dimension of citizenship. The liberal polity tends to define citizenship as rights-based, that is, as political membership by means of which one is entitled to civic, social, and political rights. Liberal theories of citizenship tend to shy away from analyzing the emotions. By contrast, this chapter aims to explore the meaning of citizenship while focusing on the affective dimension of citizenship, or citizenship defined as the emotional experience of a collective bond. By affective is meant the emotional dispositions that people develop on account of interpersonal relationships that are strengthened by shared practices. Taking the affective dimension of citizenship into account leads to distinct theorizing about the extent to which a substantive conception of citizenship is viable in a world where levels of government are shifting away from the nation-state towards both transnational and local levels.

I propose to re-appropriate insights from Plato's dialogue *The Laws* in order to theorize about the affective dimension of citizenship. Ancient philosophy continues to inspire modern theories of politics and citizenship. Aristotle, in particular, continues to be an important source of inspiration for renewing conceptions of citizenship (Wallach 1992; Boyd 2013) and philosophers such as Hannah Arendt and Benjamin Barber have rooted their theories of citizenship in Aristotle as the original source. The republican notion of citizenship defined as an active participation in the public sphere is derived from Aristotle's definition of what it means to be a citizen. Aristotle corrected the conventional Athenian view that defined the citizen as a person born of Athenian parents, by arguing that a citizen is "defined by nothing else so much as by his participation in judgment and offices" (*Politics* 1275a21-22). A good citizen, according to Aristotle, is someone who participates in the offices of the city and develops the civic virtues on account of this practice.

Plato provides an alternative account of what it means to be a member of a polity and, even though in theorizing citizenship the turn to Plato instead of Aristotle is unconventional, his insights are no less interesting.^{1, 2} In the *Laws*, Plato provides the reader with an elaborate psychology of the members of the polity. This psychology includes the emotional dispositions that are developed in shared group practices. The dialogue proposes that being a member of a political community means that one has internalized the laws of one's political community

¹ The turn to Plato is less common in part because of author anonymity. Plato wrote dialogues in which he does not partake himself and this raises the question whether or not the main interlocutor in each dialogue can be regarded to represent Plato's own views. Another reason may be that Plato acquired a bad reputation with the appearance of Karl Popper's *Open Society and Its Enemies*, which was originally published in 1945 and which depicted Plato as a totalitarian thinker. The question whether Plato proposes practices that are illiberal and undemocratic is a legitimate one, but the idea that Plato should be ignored because he is a totalitarian thinker is no longer taken seriously. A third reason that Plato is sometimes ignored is that he is considered a utopian thinker, which limits the relevance of his ideas for contemporary social and political practices. The current chapter seeks to show that Plato actually theorized a dimension of citizenship that is still present in practices of citizenship today.

² Important exceptions are Bobonich (2002) and Prauscello (2014).

both on a cognitive and an emotional level.³ This process of internalization occurs through the participation in public festivals where the laws of the polity are set to music and recited. The process of internalization during public festivals causes the members of the polity to bond with one another on an emotional level and with a focus on the laws. The people's shared feelings towards the laws provide the common ties between the members of the polity.

Plato thus provides an interesting resource because, first of all, a conception of citizenship that is based on the psychology of Plato's *Laws* would reject the idea that citizenship is based on outward characteristics such as rights or entitlements. Rather, Plato's psychology takes into account the citizen as a human being who, by being present in the polity and by sharing in its practices, develops specific emotional attachments. Such shared emotional attachments may help explain, for example, possible tensions in contemporary societies between the members of a polity and immigrants or newcomers. These tensions seem particularly difficult to diagnose and resolve because they result from differences in people's emotional make-up, which is not captured well with contemporary theories of citizenship. Involving the affective dimension in theories of citizenship has long been suspect, in particular because it was associated with a perverted sense of nationalism. Liberal theories of citizenship, such as Habermas' *Verfassungspatriotismus*, shy away from conceptualizing the affective dimension, as will be referred to later in this chapter. However, the affective dimension is all around us; it is part of the empirical reality in which we live that people develop emotional dispositions on account of civic ties. Adequate moral and political

³ Prauscello's *Performing Citizenship in Plato's Laws* was published when the first draft of the current chapter had already been written. The current chapter takes her important work into account as much as possible. One way in which the current chapter differs from *Performing Citizenship*, besides being a much shorter exercise, is that Prauscello has a strong focus on the *form* of the way in which citizenship is expressed in the *Laws*. Also, she emphasizes the erotic side of citizenship, arguing that Plato develops civic practices in order to awaken and strengthen an eager desire to become a perfect citizen in all inhabitants of the city. My own reading differs to the extent that it focuses on the content of the civic practices which, I argue, consists of the written and unwritten laws and customs of the city that are set to music.

theorizing benefits from taking the emotions and affective bonds between citizens seriously (Nussbaum 1995; 2001). As I argue in this chapter, Plato's conception of citizenship can contribute to contemporary theorizing of the affective dimension of citizenship. As such, the chapter connects to a growing interest in what is called the social psychology or political sociology of citizenship (Johnson 2010; Neuman et. al. 2007; Kymlicka-Norman 1995).

Secondly, Plato's account of citizenship may be particularly interesting to the liberal polity because, even though it is based on the process of internalization - which fits uneasily with the liberal paradigm- the object of the civic attachments are the laws and not, for example, ethnicity, history, or a shared nationhood. Law has the potential to be reasonable, universal and inclusive. I write this with hesitation because the ancient Greeks did not separate law from culture; the Greek word for laws (*nomoi*) extended beyond written laws to include unwritten laws and customs (cf. *Laws* 824c). Still, there is a sense in Plato's *Laws* in which the legislator provides the members of the city with rationalized *nomoi*, meaning *nomoi* that are distanced or dissociated as much as possible from a specific cultural context. And this fits easier in the liberal paradigm, which tends to regard citizens as autonomous individuals who are separated from cultural ties and historical context.

In this way, so I will argue, Plato's theory may still inform modern theories and practices of citizenship. In order to explore Plato's contribution, this chapter, first of all, seeks to analyze what it means to be a member of the *polis* in Plato's *Laws* by focusing on three topics in the *Laws*, namely, the psychology of the citizen based on the puppet image in book two, the discussion of the choir festivals in which all members of the city participate, and the so-called preambles to the laws that are meant to persuade or exhort the citizen to obey the law. Secondly, in light of Plato's psychology of the members of the polity, the chapter explores several of the conceptual problems that the development of the affective dimension

of citizenship runs into when different levels of governance are taken into account. The chapter concludes with the suggestion that changes in the substantive conception of citizenship need to take place on a level that facilitates the emotional bonding between its members and make the physical proximity between people possible.

1. The psychology of Plato's *Republic*

At first sight, Plato seems close to Aristotle in the definition of the citizen. According to Plato, a citizen “knows how to rule and be ruled with justice” (*Laws*, 644a), a definition comparable to Aristotle's statement that “the capacity to rule and be ruled is at any rate praised, and being able to do both well is held to be the virtue of a citizen” (*Politics*, 1277a256). The two philosophers depart, however, in their conception of what it means and what qualities are involved in ruling. For Plato, knowing how to rule and be ruled with justice is the result of the internalization of the laws of the polity. For Aristotle, knowing how to rule and how to obey is the result of participation in the offices of the polity. In short, these are two distinct conceptions of what it means to be a citizen.

In order to understand how, in Plato's *Laws*, the citizen internalizes the laws of the city, we need to look at the psychology of the citizen. Here, it is useful to start with an analysis of the soul in the *Republic*, which Plato builds upon in the *Laws*.⁴ In the *Republic*, the main interlocutor Socrates proposes that the soul has a tripartite structure and each of the parts stands in a particular relationship to the others. The first part consists of the rational element. This is the reasoning part and the part that the soul uses for learning. The second part consists of what Socrates calls the spirited part. This part is less familiar to modern ways of thinking. The spirited part is a kind of emotion that one may call justified anger. It is this part of the

⁴ For the purpose of this chapter, a significant amount of continuity between the moral psychology of Plato's *Republic* and the *Laws* is assumed, cf. Kahn (2004); Prauscello (2014).

soul, more than the other two parts, that is focused on action. Children already exhibit this type of sensibility, such as a justified anger at promises broken, candy stolen etc. Plato understands this part of the soul as separate from the emotions and desires because it - the spirited part - can be in conflict with the desires. In a well-functioning soul, spirited anger is an ally of reason in the attempt to control and manage the desires. The third and largest part of the soul consists of the desires for the pleasures of food, drink, sex, etc. Socrates calls this part of the soul one that is devoid of reason (*Rep.* 439d). It is also the part of the soul that easily predominates; human beings experience a wide range of desires and emotions, pleasures and pains. Because of this, the desiring part is the part of the soul that is most obviously present in the everyday decision-making process and is also the part, as we will see, that is of central importance to a man's psychology in the *Laws*.

In the *Republic*, ethical behavior is premised on the harmonious ordering of the soul. This ordering is a natural consequence of the soul's tripartite nature and how exactly these three parts relate is the key to understanding Plato's conception of the ordered soul. That there are three parts, and that the soul is not one uniform entity, is clear. Socrates makes the argument based on the principle of opposites. Nothing, so Socrates explains, "can do two opposite things, or be in two opposite states, in the same part of itself, at the same time, in relation to the same object" (*Rep.* 436b). Take, for example, thirst, which may be defined as the desire to drink. Even though a person may be thirsty, there are situations in which he decides not to drink. In that case there must be, in Socrates' words, "something in their soul telling them to drink, and also something stopping them" (*Rep.* 439c). Even though a person is thirsty, he may refuse to drink when the drink is poisonous. Following the principle of opposites, there would have to be another element in the soul that is not part of the desires but that inhibits action. In this case, it is the rational element that – recognizing that the water is

polluted – dominates over desire and decides not to drink. Given that one element cannot be in opposite states with respect to the same object, i.e. the glass of water, it follows that there are at least two elements involved in the process of decision-making.

As to the ordering of the three different parts, Socrates states that it is appropriate for the rational element to rule, “because it is wise and takes thought for the entire soul” (*Rep.* 441e). The spirited part is meant to be an ally of the rational part. A soul may have good judgment, but one generally needs the energy and the courage to impose wise decisions on the desiring part. The spirited part is meant to assist the reasoning part courageously, meaning that “although surrounded by pleasures and pains”, it is able to stand up to the emotions and to “keep intact the instructions given to it by reason about what is to be feared and what is not to be feared” (*Rep.* 442c). The desiring part, in turn, should be moderate and obedient. Lacking reason, it should submit to the rule of the rational part. This is possible only if, through habituation, the desiring part becomes moderate. Genuine moderation is defined as a kind of friendship or harmony between the three parts, suggesting that the desiring part agrees to be ruled by reason with the assistance of the spirited part (*Rep.* 442c-d). When each part performs its proper function – the rational element rules over the soul, the spirited part assists the rational part courageously and the desiring part submits to the control of the rational and spirited parts – then the soul is properly ordered and ethical behavior follows (*Rep.* 441e).

2. The psychology and education of the citizen in Plato’s *Laws*

Note that, following the previous analysis, the development of an ordered soul does not entail a complete suppression or expulsion of the desires. The point is – and this is where we turn to Plato’s *Laws* – that human life is happiest when one indulges the desires in a reasonable way. As in the *Republic*, the soul in the *Laws* is presented as having a reasonable

part, which should rule, and a desiring part, which should obey reason. The middle or spirited part of the soul does not play a prominent independent role in the *Laws*.⁵ Following the static conception in the *Republic* about the order in the soul, the *Laws* provides a more dynamic account of what it means to live an ordered life and an account in which the emotions play an important role. One should experience the right pleasure or pain at the right time, in the right amount, and towards the right object (*Laws*, 636e). Desires in themselves do not cause unhappiness, but excessive desires *do* (such as for a whole bag of licorice), and so do desires at the wrong time (such as an alcoholic drink in the morning) or towards the wrong object (such as someone else's wife). In the *Laws*, being in control of one's desires and emotions manifests itself as a kind of musical harmony between the different parts of the soul. Just as a conductor directs an orchestra in a musical performance by way of allowing different musicians to play at the right moment and by unifying the performers into a harmonious whole, so reason decides – in the performance of life – which emotion to act upon, which to ignore, to what amount, and at what time to allow an emotion to motivate a choice for action. In this way, the balanced, virtuous person goes through life with his reason and emotions in tune. Moreover, just as the lack of synchronicity of one section of performers results in dissonance in an orchestra, so do the rebellion of pleasures or pains result in chaos in the soul. In a person with a healthy disposition, such disorder causes someone to experience honorable shame (*aidos*), that is a sense of embarrassment at not being in control of one's self (*Laws*, 647a; 648e ff).

The potential for internal struggle and lack of self-control is more evident in Plato's *Laws* than in Plato's *Republic*, given its emphasis on the role of the emotions and desires.⁶

⁵ For an interesting discussion on this topic, see Sassi (2008).

⁶ Cf. Gerson (2003) and Dorion (2007). Plato's *Laws* is often considered to offer a description of a second-best city, in which reason is less to be relied upon to provide order, whether in the city or the soul. Cf. Laks (2001).

With this awareness comes an emphasis on cultivating moderation, which is the virtue that ensures the harmony between reason and the desiring part of the soul, including practices that promote the habituation of the soul towards moderation. The Greek word for moderation is internal harmony or *sophrosune*. Internal harmony or *sophrosune* goes beyond the moral ideal of being in control by repressing certain emotions – the Greek word for this is *enkrateia*, meaning to have control or power (*kratos*) over oneself. Moderation as *sophrosune* reflects the musical harmony that a conductor brings about in the orchestra; the conductor does not dominate over the musicians but, rather, coordinates the orchestra, allowing the different instruments to be played at the appropriate times, in the right intensity, and for the right length of time.

How, then, does the moral psychology presented in the *Laws* relate to Plato's understanding of the citizen? Here, we turn to yet another image. Instead of an orchestra that produces musical harmony with the help of a conductor, the soul is now represented by an image of a puppet on strings (*Laws* 644c-5c). The strings are made of different materials. Most of the strings are made of iron and are tough. They represent the passions that pull the puppet in all sorts of directions. Among the many hard strings attached to the puppet there is one that is soft and golden and that represents reason. The puppet, of course, is meant to follow the soft, reasonable cord, but it is being tossed about by the stronger cords. Therefore, so the story goes, the golden cord of calculation needs helpers. Its main helper is a socially cultivated feeling of shame. We see here that, in an ingenious way, the puppet image connects the internal functioning of the soul to the social context. A well-functioning soul needs the support of an environment that praises noble action and shames ignoble action. By means of social praise for reasonable action and social blame for unreasonable action, the golden cord in the soul that represents reason, receives support because the cords that represent the desire for

praise now pull in the same direction. Social customs have an effect on the tug of strings that acts upon the puppet. In a terse yet graphic way, the puppet on strings illustrates the affective dimension of citizenship. The social practices, which differ from polity to polity, make different kinds of behavior more or less pleasurable to the citizen on account of social approval or disapproval. With repeated strengthening of certain strings over other strings, the citizen-as-puppet develops a specific disposition or emotional makeup that is shared with other citizens since all are subjected to the same practices and customs.

The laws of a polity play a role in the development of the emotional disposition of the citizen as well. The story about the puppet on strings operates on the premise that the puppet has a golden cord of reason that needs to be developed. The laws of a polity should be reasonable operate in the place of the golden cord until the golden cord comes into its own. The golden cord coming into its own means that the individual matures emotionally and intellectually and gains understanding about the nature of the different passions that pull him in different directions. Law, based on this argument, supports the puppet in developing its ability for moral reasoning, which in turn promotes the internal harmony of the soul. One could argue that the cultivation of moral reasoning belongs primarily to the sphere of the family, but in the *Laws* the focus is on the moral development of the person as a member of the polity. The development of *sophrosune* occurs on account of being a member of the political community who subject to its laws and a participant in its practices. Membership of a political community has meaning for one's internal disposition.

We are now ready to provide a more elaborate definition of what Plato means by citizenship. Plato's *Laws* defines a citizen as someone who lives in a polity, is an active member of the polity and – as member of the polity – is subject to its laws. The laws of the

polity should reflect right reason.⁷ This is a prescriptive, not descriptive argument; the interlocutors assume the existence of right reason and do not take into consideration what happens when the laws do not reflect right reason. The citizen is meant – by means of common practices that will be discussed below – to internalize the law and strengthen his ability to reason correctly about the different desires and emotions that he harbors in his soul. This is the psychological process that underlies Plato’s definition of the citizen as someone who “knows how to rule and be ruled with justice” (*Laws*, 643e-4a). In other words, there are psychological prerequisites that qualify one as a citizen. Citizenship is not a right or a legal status. Rather, citizenship for Plato in the *Laws* entails an inner disposition that is shaped by the customs and written laws of the polity.

3. Public festivals and moral education

The process of internalization of the law occurs through a variety of communal practices. The proposal about these practices is demanding, involving public holidays and religious festivals for every day of the year (*Laws*, 828b). For Plato, the education of the citizen is a full-time affair that lasts a lifetime. The demanding nature of the proposal fits uneasily with life in modern societies. Still, the way in which Plato understands the psychological processes that occur during these common practices are informative. The public festivals work on two levels. Music and movement affect the emotional part of the soul, while the lyrics influence the rational part of the soul. The poets are meant to set the actual texts of the laws to music and choral dancing that is harmonious, joyful and playful (*Laws*, 811d).⁸

⁷ For a novel discussion of this argument, see Irwin (2010).

⁸ Throughout the *Laws*, Plato plays with the double meaning in Greek of the word *nomos*, which can be translated both as law and as a song that was sung by a chorus or a soloist and accompanied by a string instrument (see especially 700b; 799e). By doing so, he emphasizes the connection between the laws and the songs that are sung and performed at the public festivals.

The so-called Guardians of the Laws supervise the poets to make sure that they do not interpret the text of the laws in a way that deviates from convention (*Laws*, 801d). These songs are then performed at the public festivals, which are repeated daily and in which the citizens themselves participate both by singing and dancing to the songs in unison.

Human beings are considered to have the natural ability to perceive and experience rhythm and harmony (*Laws*, 654a). Furthermore, human beings are considered to find the experience of rhythm and harmony naturally pleasurable. Plato is clearly aware that human beings learn and remember things better when they *enjoy* the pedagogic experience. People, especially the young, are averse to seriousness and this is why the texts of the laws should be mixed with pleasant and playful practices, just like a medicine is best taken with a sugar coating. The songs and dances function as enchantments that, in a musical and playful way, help the performer – who is the citizen and who enacts the text of the law in song and dance – absorb the law on an emotional level (*Laws*, 659d-660a; 665c). These performances habituate the people to experience pleasurable emotions whilst singing the texts of the laws. In this way, so the interlocutor argues, the people learn to love becoming a good citizen who *enjoys* obedience to the law (*Laws*, 634e).

One could remark that the notion of citizens singing songs that have the texts of the laws as the lyrics is quite childish. The interlocutor refers to early childhood education, which is mostly concerned with the habituation of pleasure and feelings of pain (*Laws*, 653a ff.). He proposes that children are especially excitable by music and movement and that childhood education depends on the Muses (*Laws*, 654a). Play is the most common and appropriate practice for producing good character at an early age.⁹ Furthermore, the interlocutor provides us with the existential argument that, perhaps, human beings are *meant* to be like children who

⁹ Throughout the *Laws*, Plato also plays with the words *paideia* (the shaping of character), *paidia* (play) and *pais* (child), which have the same Greek root.

spend their lives at play: “Every man and woman should spend life in this way, playing the noblest possible games” (*Laws*, 803c; cf. 644d). Wine is promoted to encourage those made solemn with age to return to a state of childhood playfulness (*Laws*, 646a; 671b). Not only does playfulness facilitate moral learning, human beings are meant to be cheerful. In the *Laws*, man can be said to be at his best in songs and dance during the public festivals.

On a rational level, so-called preambles to the laws are meant to persuade the citizen of the purpose of the law (*Laws*, 720e). Plato’s argument is that free people internalize the law not by force or indoctrination but by being convinced of the soundness of the arguments put forth (cf. *Laws*, 720d). The preamble expresses not a philosophical argument but, rather, an argument from common sense that is meant to show the law’s rationale.¹⁰ For example, the preface to the marriage law argues that men should marry between the age of thirty and thirty-five in order to achieve some trace of immortality by leaving offspring. A bachelor of over thirty-five actually has to pay a fine and this is, so the preamble continues, to discourage the idea that not maintaining a family and living the bachelor’s lifestyle is worth it. Even though liberal countries would reject such a law on account of interfering in what we would today consider private choices, there is still a kind of logic here that explains the reasoning behind the law. The main point is that the laws that are sung and performed during the public festivals are not dogmatic rules that work by mere threat of punishment.

In considering public festivals, and the emotional bonds developed at festivals, Plato is theorizing a phenomenon that resonates with the findings of contemporary anthropological research. In *Keeping Together in Time. Dance and Drill in Human History*, William McNeill coins the term “muscular bonding”, referring to the “human emotional response to moving

¹⁰ There is a dispute about the character of the preambles as rational or sub-rational, with Stalley (1983) arguing that the preambles stay on the level of moral exhortations, Bobonich (2002) arguing that several preambles actually contain philosophically sophisticated arguments, and Annas (2010) proposing that the preambles have a mixture in them of both rational and non-rational elements.

rhythmically together in dance and drill.” (McNeill 1995, p. vi) Bonding occurs, so McNeill argues, due to the pleasurable experience of dance and drill; it is “natural and automatic” to move to the rhythm of music. McNeill refers to the boundary loss that promotes emotional bonding and the feeling of being one as a result of a common “rhythmic muscular” experience of participating in the musical performance (1995, p. 8). One of the original purposes of dance in small, independent communities is that “dancing became an efficacious way of consolidating distinct subgroups within larger communities.” (McNeill, 1995, p. 42, 52 ff.) In the experience, differences are transcended and previously marginalized persons or complete outsiders “coalesce into new, more or less coherent groups.” (McNeill, 1995, p. 52) McNeill also recognizes the political implications of the practice. The social consolidation is achieved by including previous outsiders and, at the same time, enhanced by the exclusion of others.

Now, the story of Plato’s *Laws* concerns the design of a law code for a new colony. The establishment of colonies was commonplace in ancient Greece. Colonization occurred on account of overpopulation or civil strife, when part of the population migrated or displaced itself (*Laws*, 708b). The case of the story of the *Laws* concerns a situation where the new inhabitants come from all over Crete (*Laws*, 708a), which indicated that there was a lack of tribal unity amongst them. The challenge exists not so much in having this population accept a new code of law. Since they come from different legal systems, they will not all be attached to the same code and are more likely to be open to collectively accepting a new one. Instead, the challenge is – in the words of the interlocutor – to have them “breathe together and grow to be constantly united – like a team of horses, as they say” (*Laws*, 708d). The public festivals, where people join in song and choral dancing developing a common attachment to the laws of the polity, are to provide the transformative experience that Plato is looking for while crafting the citizens of the new political community. The rhythmic bodily agreement that is part of the

choral performances creates affective bonds between the citizens. Moreover, the affective bonds between the citizens are directed towards a common object of affection, namely, the laws of the polity. Together, they celebrate the written law. In doing so, the citizens are changed internally and are soldered together.

4. Limitations and applications

When thinking about the contribution that Plato's understanding of citizenship in the *Laws* could make to contemporary theories of citizenship in liberal democracies, several objections present themselves. Some of the legal content proposed in the *Laws*, such as the marriage laws that were discussed earlier, are illiberal in the sense that they interfere in the private lives of individuals.¹¹ Also, Plato presents a static theory of law that seems unrealistic and undemocratic. In Plato's *Laws*, change in the law is possible but only under rare circumstances (*Laws*, 772d), which is an indication that laws are not arrived at by democratic deliberation.¹² In particular, the songs and dances are not subject to change and, indeed, are sanctified in their permanence so that the ethos of the polity is the same for different generations of people (*Laws*, 799a). Overall, Plato's purpose is to provide the system of laws with a sacred status in order to exact reverence to the laws. These are all valid concerns. And, yet, the idea that citizenship implies an emotional bond with one's fellow citizens and an attachment to the laws of the city may still provide a correction to liberal, rights-based theories that, in lacking an affective dimension, can be regarded as too abstract and, therefore, divorced

¹¹Indirectly, of course, liberal laws also impact the private lives of individuals. For example, tax laws may favor married couples over people who are single. It is often the case that liberal laws implicitly promote one way of life over the other; law is barely ever completely neutral in this respect.

¹²This is not to say that there are no democratic elements in the city. The *Laws* proposes a regime that even allows women over forty who are past childbearing age to run for most offices (*Laws*, 785d). For many of the public offices, the selection procedure is by lot, which was considered to be democratic *par excellence*. Still, even though the city in *The Laws* has a wide range of offices that are open to all citizens, the citizens do not make or change their own laws.

from reality in that they fail to capture what for many people constitutes part of the everyday experience of citizenship.

One observation is that the practice in Plato's *Laws* concerns emotional bonding in small-scale communities. The proposal for the new colony in the *Laws* involves a populace of 5040 families (the number has the most numerous and consecutive divisors, see *Laws*, 738a). This, of course, is a very small community. If we accept that the emotional bonding of members of a polity through shared practices is an inherent part of what being a citizen means, then the local, rather than the national, transnational, or global level would be best suited for the reinforcement of citizenship. Given that human beings are embodied beings and accepting the premise that emotional bonding involves physical proximity, the local level may be the primary level at which citizenship develops its affective dimension.

And, yet, there is a way in which Plato offers an account of citizenship that has the potential to transcend the local. The objective of civic affection is the system of laws and, in modern times, laws tend to be primarily a national or international affair. This raises the question whether national and international law may provide the foundation for citizenship in the Platonic sense. One could imagine, with some effort, the musical recitation and performance of the Bill of Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and so forth on a local level, in civic groups that are small enough to facilitate human interaction and bonding.

Still, Plato is an unlikely source of inspiration for the conceptualization of any kind of citizenship that claims to go beyond the national level. According to Plato, not only is the practice of citizenship local and communal, out of necessity the law will always have a particularistic aspect because of being language-specific. This argument is not emphasized in the *Laws*, but the connection between reason and language for which the ancient Greek has one word (*logos*) is evident. Human beings have language because they share in reason and

because law embodies sound reason, but being language specific will always have different sounds, articulations and connotations across different languages. Therefore, Plato's conception of citizenship is likely to sit uneasily with, for example, the notion that was articulated by the Stoic Diogenes Laertius who called himself a citizen of the world, providing a foundation for what in modern times is called cosmopolitan citizenship (see, for example, Soysal 1998; Nussbaum, 2002).

The contemporary theory that comes closest to the idea of citizenship as having internalized legal norms is the theory of constitutional patriotism. The theory of constitutional patriotism has undergone development but can be stated to defend the notion that the citizen is one who is loyal to the democratic state and to the rule of law. The citizen is meant to have affinity with the principles of the constitution and the constitutional culture of the country. The emphasis on the public performance of laws set to music and choreography is not part of the theory of constitutional patriotism; as a liberal theory it shies away from a notion of citizenship that is transformative on account of the public celebrations whereby citizens develop a common attachment to the laws and to each other, even though the theory does allow for a symbolic content and narratives that evoke particular emotions (Müller 2007, p. 62). This raises the question whether Plato's theory of citizenship can inform the theory of constitutional patriotism. Some have argued that the purely academic *Verfassungspatriotismus* of Jürgen Habermas suffers from "emotional abstinence" (Müller, 2007, 43). According to Müller, Habermas argues that "citizens attach themselves to the norms and values at the heart of the constitution, that is, the constitutional essentials, and, in particular, the fair and democratic procedures producing legitimate law" (Müller 2007: 58). The Loyalty requirement of citizens to the constitution should show itself in external behavior, not as part of an inner disposition. One question is how newcomers are expected to develop their affinity with the

principles of the constitution. Moreover, one could question whether the external allegiance involved is substantive enough to last through major challenges and across generations.

Even though the idea of festivals at the heart of which is the public performance of the written constitution may engender awkwardness in a liberal polity, it may also strengthen both people's knowledge of and especially attachment to the constitution. Setting the text of the constitution to music may be just as awkward or even less compared to the attempt in the Netherlands in 2014 to celebrate the bicentennial anniversary of the Dutch constitution in a historicized way with battles of knights, people dressed up in costumes of the time period, and random culinary and musical festivals. One could argue that this was a missed opportunity to educate Dutch citizens about the text of the constitution and help them cherish the document, especially because Dutch citizens have little knowledge of the content of the constitution, which makes it difficult for Dutch citizens to become genuinely attached to the document (cf. Oomen 2009).

Another example of a missed opportunity is the Treaty of Lisbon, signed by the EU member states in 2007, which modified the proposed text for a European constitution. The Treaty of Lisbon suppressed all mention of the symbols of the European Union, such as the flag and the European Anthem, Beethoven's Ode to Joy. The treaty also eliminated the preamble to the draft European constitution, articulating amongst other things an allegiance to democracy, equality, the rule of law, and a commitment to forge a common destiny. The political will did not exist to create a European polity, but thinking from the affective dimension of citizenship the changes implied significant obstacles that prevent the development of European citizenship.

Plato's *Laws* may be, in several ways, less illiberal and undemocratic than expected. The citizen internalizes laws that are not perfectly liberal, but are not irrational or subjective either.

The preambles to the laws ensure a reasoning aspect to the law. Plato's theory of citizenship helps us reflect on the affective dimension of citizenship and how this is developed. Plato's insights help us appreciate the idea that citizenship is not (merely) a legal status or a ticket to certain rights and responsibilities but also a way of being that affects our emotional relationship to others; fellow citizens, strangers, and newcomers. Plato's insights help us recognize, articulate and interpret these emotions and, possibly engage in the craft of citizenship in a more self-conscious way.

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