Lecture goals: introduce the concept of citizenship. The implications of this for civil society and public policy are profound. In a competitive, law-of-the-jungle society, civic groups are out to promote their own interests, even if at the cost of others. Once the concept of citizenship is introduced, civic groups involved in policy debates may have to (gasp) talk to and compromise with other groups, even admit that their cause is less important than others, and so less worthy of attention by the policy system.

Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira. Bresser Pereira identifies four types of citizenship:

- civil -- "the right to freedom and property, vis-à-vis a state that used to be oppressive and despotic" (p. 147).
- political -- "the right to vote and to be voted, therefore to participate in political power against a state which before that, was oligarchic" (ibid).
- social -- "can be understood as rights against other citizens, if we think, for instance, about worker’s rights in relation to their employers. However, when we think about social rights as the right to a worthy survival, to education, culture, health care, these are rights against civil society and the respective state. If the society possesses material resources to guarantee such needs, they are transformed into rights" (ibid).
- republican -- "the right all citizens have to the res publica or the public patrimony – whether the historical, the environmental, or the economic patrimony – is effectively public, that is, of everybody and for everybody. I will especially try to propose, among the republican rights, a definition for the right to the economic public patrimony, which may be understood as a stock of assets, but should mainly be viewed as the resource flows which are controlled by the state and non-state public organizations. In this century, when the res publica has become very large, representing between one third and the half part of all nations income, the greed of individuals and groups for it has increased, and its protection has become historically imperative" (2002, pp. 145-6).

I take two points from this. The first is that citizenship as a right is strongly enjoyed in the US. We saw that in Table 1, in week two (I’ll reproduce it below, adding one indicator), which
showed that levels of corruption and of public service efficiency and integrity are much higher in the US than in most other countries. Indeed Bresser Pereira’s point is that in his Brazil, the fight for republican rights had not yet been won, given the high levels of corruption in his country (see link -- and he wrote this before the build-up to the World Cup and Olympics!). His point is that what we need in modern society -- having won civil, political and social citizen rights -- is 'republican' citizenship, in which we take on the responsibilities of citizenship as well as the rights of this.

Table 1  
Citizenship – different dimensions compared

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Civil/pol liberty</th>
<th>Corruption</th>
<th>Public services</th>
<th>Economic freedom from Gov’t Inefficiency</th>
<th>Gov’t size</th>
<th>Gov’t regs</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data explanations/sources:
- Democracy -- An aggregated democracy score, rated 0-10, with 10 = more democratic. **Economist Intelligence Unit**.
- Liberty: Political and Civil -- From **Freedom House**, transformed in to 1-7 scales, with 1 = free, 7 = not free. The score is the mean of the civil and political rating.
- Corruption -- Corruption perceptions index, rated 0-10, with 10 = less corrupt. **Transparency International**.
- Public services – The **Failed State Index** Public Services sub-score reversed, so that higher scores reflect better public services.
- Government efficiency -- Functioning of government, rated 0-10, with higher = more effective government. **Economist Intelligence Unit**.
- Government Size and Regulations -- Economic freedom indicator, rated 0-10, with 10 = more economic freedom (and so smaller government and less regulation). **Fraser/Cato Institute**.

The rights of citizenship having been won, then there is the question of responsibilities. Bresser-Pereira’s point, again, was partly that there is a reason why Brazilians (or Greeks! Click for example) are reluctant to pay taxes, as they receive little back from their government in return. But Americans? To go back to the politics of the 1980s, where’s the beef? (click for political, and hamburger contexts).
**Rights v. market demand.** The distinction may seem largely a semantic one, but the general idea is that a problem with government-by-markets (the new public management) can be that the consumer has no rights (without meaning to overstate this). Rather than rights, consumers have only market demand. The idea behind market-based new public management reforms is:

- First, market mechanisms can be a great, direct way of working out what individual members of society want. Rather than paying taxes to government which then sets up an agency to do what people want; instead cut out the middle people, reduce transaction costs (all those tax collectors, agency staff, and accountants to keep track of the dough).
- Second, markets can help to improve efficiency. If an agency providing a public service has competition, and it isn't performing, it will die. Death, here, is our friend, or what Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter characterized as ‘creative destruction’.

**Constitutional rights!** Yet we are all citizens, not consumers, and citizens have rights, regardless of ability to pay. As indicated elsewhere, this is not a pinko Commie position, but is enshrined in the founding documents of the US:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men…” -- Declaration of Independence (1776).

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” -- Constitution of the United States (1789).

Then of course, there are the [Bill of Rights](https://www.archives.gov/education/activities/bill-rights.html).

**Real demand in markets.** Citizenship needn't be incompatible with market reforms, if citizen rights are manifested in vouchers or something like that, which ensure that citizens receive the services to which they are entitled as members of society. In the interplay of supply and demand that lie at the heart of market efficiency, economists distinguish between demand (what consumers want), and real demand (demand backed by money). So given inequality of income and poverty, a market-based society will produce unequal access to services if something isn't done to 'top up' the resources of folks outside of the over-privileged class. But in general, some people (the Denhardts and others) see a problem here.

**The aggregation problem.** A second issue surrounding citizenship is that in market-based decision-making, decisions are made through the aggregation of consumer preferences: add up what individuals want, and that will equal what society wants. A couple of dimensions of this:

- **Market failure!** Individual consumer preferences and collective policy desires may conflict. Consider, for example, the eagerness with which we Americans shop at Wal-Mart and gobble up those inexpensive, Chinese-made goods; while on the other hand when polled we often indicate that we want government to prevent us from doing this. An example (source):

  "Generally speaking, do you think U.S. trade policy should have restrictions on imported foreign goods to protect American jobs, or have no restrictions to enable American consumers to have the most choices and the lowest prices?"
So perhaps, deep down inside, we want the nanny-state to tell us what's good for us: carrots rather than cookies, as a student (Tezich 2006) in a past class put it.

- **Democratic dialogue.** It has also been argued that society is strengthened by the interactions inherent in the democratic process. However messy and distasteful you claim to find the negative political ads, note that the campaigns wouldn't be running them if they didn't think you responded to the dirt throwing. Witness perhaps the greatest electoral scam in recent American history: the [Swift Boat Veterans for Truth](http://www.swiftboatveterans.com).

**Dimock.** Marshall Dimock clearly saw this contrast between citizens and consumers, as "enhanced citizenship is a much more reliable ally than self-interest and market forces" (p. 21). He later asserts that "business didn't want good government, the reason being that efficient government tended to eat holes in business liberties" (p. 22).

Dimock on what citizenship is:
- "It is one of those holistic words that ties everything together and serves a number of vital functions. It is more than a legal concept denoting rights and obligations to the political state. Citizenship at its best is nothing short of a way of life. It is geared to the commonwealth. It involves a sense of responsibility, self-induced, and a dedication to collective need similar to what is found in well adjusted families throughout the world" (p. 21).

Dimock on what citizenship does:
- "It makes voters more enterprising and active and more inclined to shoulder responsibility.
- "It greatly eases the burden of administrators, reducing it by as much as 25 to 50 percent in localities or countries where true consensuses exist (voluntary ones, not coerced).
- "Finally, despite attachment to a particular country, citizenship in its larger aspect is a viable means to greater mutual accommodation and accord in the relations of nations. It may become, in time, a substitute for divisive ideologies" (p. 21).

Dimock on citizenship and scale:
- "If our governing units were smaller -- both corporate and law enforcing -- would an enhanced sense of responsibility have made it possible to avoid the gigantic debts we have accumulated, in which period America went from the world's largest creditor to the world's largest debtor" (p. 23)?

o He may be wrong here. Although the most recent statistics that I can readily get my hands on points out that debt seems to be inversely related to size. The world's most indebted countries (as a percentage of their economies) are Congo (both of them), Angola, Burundi, Ecuador, Armenia, Jamaica, Jordan, Lebanon, Panama, Papua New Guinea, and Serbia (World Bank 2005).

**Putnam.** The major problem identified by Putnam is, "the strange disappearance of social capital in America." This echoes a
problem also identified by Jim Perry (2007). For Perry, the more fluid nature of public service employment today suggests that employees of public agencies (not to mention workers for the contracting agencies providing some of these services) will be more and more like private sector workers: task orientated, motivated by pay, and lacking both loyalty to the agency and commitment to its contribution to public service. For Putnam, 'we the people' are lacking this same sense of civic-mindedness, are increasingly atomized individuals with no meaningful commitment to community, whether that be neighbourhood, town, state, or country. Consider, for instance, the way in which 'support for the troops' in our last two wars has become little more than symbolic: rather than raise the taxes to literally support these troops, we instead gave ourselves tax cuts, and many of us bought yellow, ribbon-shaped, magnetic 'support the troops' bumper stickers (most of which, on my admittedly informal survey, were made in China).

Civic responsibility

Civic irresponsibility. Bill McGregor addresses an obvious implication of Dimock's discussion, a central tenet of the communitarian thesis, and what I see as the major flaw in the Denhardts' New Public Service: what to do if the public administrator seeks to create dialogue about shared values, to broker interests among citizens and community groups, and all that; but it turns out that some of these citizens and community groups don't share values (abortion v. choice; a well regulated militia v. right to bear arms; tax cuts for the rich v. social spending for the poor)?

Participation! For the Denhardts, the solution is civic participation. Get civic groups in a room together, then public servants “help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests” (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000, p. 553). First, note that inability to articulate interests has not been a problem in recent American society, from Tea Partiers to 99%ers.

Beyond this, Dumont and I identify at least four problems with civic participation:
1. Benefits of irresponsibility. The organizational dynamics of some advocacy groups require lack of consensus. As Wronski argued in week four: "the techniques of slogan-shouting and hysterical protests" (1971, p. 72) can be very effective for the manager of a policy advocacy group seeking to generate more members, more revenue, and so to maintain her job.
2. Inequality. Democracy is a one person, one vote system; whereas civic participation features different levels of influence.
3. Non-participation. Related to #2, many people don’t participate. So to the extent that democracy goes participatory, those who won’t, or can’t participate lose. Unless we amend the Constitution, this won’t work.
4. Poor participation. We Americans are a lot of chuckleheads.

Dangers of civic irresponsibility. Indeed, I worry that the New Public Service, like McGregor's "democratic scheme requires that careerists cheerfully put themselves at risk by educating and sustaining an often querulous public" (McGregor 1984, p. 126). I relate this to the central warning in Charles Goodsell's Case for Bureaucracy:

“…Government administration in America may be regarded as generally competent and effective if we look at it in a balanced way and in relation to what is possible. Whereas public bureaucracy in the United States, at all levels of government, inevitably involves individual instances of waste, incompetence, abuse of power, and breakdown, it does on the
whole and in comparison to most countries and even the business sector in this country, perform surprisingly well.”

“I say ‘surprisingly because we Americans are taught throughout our lives, from hearth and home on through school and career, that our government is a sea of waste, a swamp of incompetence, a mountain of unchecked power, an endless plain of mediocrity. Our media and politicians tell us that public bureaucracy is bloated in size, inefficient compared to business, a stifling place to work, indifferent to ordinary citizens, the problem rather than the solution. Bureaucrats – with the word uttered in contempt – are alleged in all quarters to be lazy, incompetent, devious, even dangerous” (p. 3).

“…Instead of addressing the many problems that do exist in bureaucracy, this attitude can exacerbate them by encouraging the kinds of political rhetoric and policy that demoralize agencies, adversely affecting their performance and encouraging the best staff members to leave. Furthermore, it promotes a set of negative assumptions about government employment that keeps the brightest of our young people from considering a public service career” (p. 4).

Goodsell later argues:

"If, then, we (1) assume that progress is inevitable; (2) assign responsibility for progress to government; (3) expect insoluble problems to be solved; and (4) hand over the job of solving them to the bureaucrats -- what is the consequence? The consequence is that we set bureaucracy up for failure" (p. 59).

This failure is more likely if we disrespect and mock bureaucrats, discouraging it as a career.

Civic responsibilities. What McGregor emphasizes, rightly so I think, is that citizenship involves more than rights, it also involves responsibilities. The conception of citizenship presented by the Denhardts is a rights-based one: citizens have rights, and it is the responsibility of public administrators to serve these to the citizens. What Goodsell and McGregor point out is that citizenship can also be seen as a responsibility. Citizens don't have a right to demand things, which public administrators then have an obligation to provide, especially reconciling conflicting demands (abortion v. choice; a well regulated militia v. right to bear arms; tax cuts for the rich v. social spending for the poor) through dialogue to determine shared values. Instead, citizens themselves have a responsibility to engage in dialogue and to compromise.

Instead, we get McGregor's identification of the problem:

"an extraordinary knowledge disparity exists between public service careerists... and a civitas that wants problems solved. The gap is not only large, it appears to be growing and the effects can only be worrisome. The knowledge gap may well contribute to mistrust of institutions by citizens to know when things are not working but not able to say what the possibilities for successful intervention are. The gap may explain some of the measured contempt public bureaucrats have displayed toward an unknowing and disrespectful public" (p. 127).

McGregor's solutions:

- Relying on professional ethics to give the public administrator the courage to 'educate' the public, in the sense of challenging them with the hard choices that he implies above.
- Devolving "responsibility for service delivery and production back to the communities where the problems reside" (p. 128).
"nurturing a potentially argumentative public... a dominant ethic of public service must be that careerists keep citizens fully informed about the possibilities for public service... The democratic point is that the public need is for intelligently organized information presented so that informed decisions can be made. Stonewalling public scrutiny by dumping masses of unintelligible data into the laps of inquiring citizens is as bad as shredding public records" (p. 128).

Three goals essential to the reconciliation of civism and career public service.

- "One is to defend career administrators. Only a secure service will be willing to make itself vulnerable to the experimentation recommended in this discussion...
- "A second goal is that of civic capital formation. Here the goal is to enhance the knowledge base of public affairs so that citizens can understand how real public affairs operate, how practical problems affect public affairs, what the action options are, and what the criteria are by which options can be judged...
- "A third goal is to broaden the meaning of public service" (p. 130). This last point refers more to the blurring of public and private (for and nonprofit) lines in the provision of public services.

But the civic group? Missing from all of this has been the citizen’s responsibilities. In the Brazilian context, Bresser Pereira clearly wants citizens to pay their taxes! In the US, Dumont and I argue that civic irresponsibility in the simplest sense of the word – the responsibility of citizens to participate responsibly – is the only solution to what ails us.

Summary: citizenship: it's not just about the cookies!

References


