



The virtues of urban citizenship [☆]

Frank Cunningham ^{*}

University of Toronto, Cities Centre, 455 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2G8

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 9 July 2010

Received in revised form 17 September 2010

Accepted 15 October 2010

Available online 13 November 2010

Keywords:

Urban citizenship

Civic virtues

Aristotle

Benjamin

Simmel

ABSTRACT

Making use of Aristotle's analyses, this paper proposes a conception of urban citizenship and the virtues that are essential to it. Toleration, concern, and trusteeship are identified as the key virtues and preconditions for the inculcation of these virtues within the culture of a city's citizens are discussed.

© 2010 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

"A citizen," Aristotle famously maintained, "is one who shares in governing and being governed. He differs under different forms of government, but in the best state he is one who is able and willing to be governed and to govern with a view to the life of virtue" (Aristotle, 1943b, [c300BCE], III 13, pp. 1283–1284).¹ As in many of Aristotle's inquiries, this definition combines description and prescription. He means that the proper function of a citizen, or the essence of citizenship correctly understood, is to govern and to be governed in this way. In this paper I shall follow Aristotle, focusing on his view of the virtues and their preconditions rather than on his metaphysical theories. Also, the paper is not meant as an exegesis or general evaluation of Aristotle's texts. Instead, his justly celebrated analytical talents are drawn on to assist thought about a challenging subject.

Further, I am appropriating Aristotle's conception only with respect to cities, allowing that urban citizenship may differ in important respects from national, regional,

or (if such is ever achieved) global citizenship. This requires few adjustments in Aristotle's treatment, at least from the point of view of geographic extent or population size, since he had in mind city states, which were much smaller than today's nations and, though also smaller than our major cities, still significantly larger and more complex than villages.

Robust citizenship

Aristotle's conception of citizenship is, for the most part, a robust one, where this means that it is more than simply possessing the ability to vote. But before listing the characteristics of robust citizenship, it should be noted that with respect to the *scope* of citizenship, Aristotle's view is anemic even in comparison with one that limits it to voting, as he restricts citizenship rights to men (and, of course, he excludes slaves). While gendered exclusions have been eliminated in almost all modern cities, in Canada and most other countries, immigrants without national citizenship are still denied voting rights in their cities of residence as are people younger than 18 (hence most high school students). Also, even in those cities where it is possible for the homeless to vote by providing them with a pro temp address, the process for securing one is usually prohibitively complex. In my view robust citizenship would redress these exclusions.

Beyond the matter of scope, a robust conception sanctions a proactive citizenry and includes the notion that a

[☆] An earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference, *Cosmopolis/Cosmopolitics: Humanities and Citizenship After Neo-Liberalism*, at the Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University, May 5–8, 2010. (Proceedings available in the *Journal of the Institute for the Humanities*, Vol. V, Spring 2010.) I am grateful to participants in this event and to Richard Stren and Kanishka Goonwardena for helpful suggestions.

* Tel.: +1 416 962 9788.

E-mail address: frankcunningham55@gmail.com

¹ Book III chap. 13, overlap of the standardized ("Bekker") pages, 1283–1284. Subsequent references are to these designations and, unless otherwise noted, to Aristotle's *Politics*.

virtuous citizen is one who participates in a city's public life. This in turn raises the question of what such participation might entail, and again a distinction may be drawn between more and less robust interventions. Keeping informed about civic affairs, involving oneself in the electoral process beyond voting, for instance, in campaigning for candidates, calling elected officials to account when they betray the public trust, and other such activities go beyond the emaciated model with respect to being governed. In terms of governing, robust forms include being active in a neighbourhood association, participating in social movements within a city, taking direct responsibility for maintenance of a park or other public space, and acting as an "eye on the street" as Jane Jacobs described the vital function of making cities safe (Jacobs, 1992, [1961], p. 35).

Robust citizen participation may also involve what James Holston calls "insurgent citizenship," which functions outside of formal arenas "to empower, parody, derail, or subvert state agendas" and includes "the realm of the homeless, networks of migration, neighborhoods of Queer Nation, autoconstructed peripheries where the poor build their own homes," and other such spaces (Holston, 1999, p. 167). At a limit, it may take the form of direct action, including civil disobedience, as when citizens occupy a private space or a restricted public one to make it generally accessible (Borasi & Zardini, 2009).

A second difference from the passive and merely formal conception is that this one links citizenship to the characters of a city's citizens. Citizens should govern and be governed, as Aristotle put it, with a view to virtue. To the extent that a city fails to expect, prompt, and acknowledge civically virtuous activity on the part of its citizens or that their comportment is devoid of virtuous motivation, citizenship in that city is diminished. Appealing to what they consider realistic, most political theorists who, in the tradition of Joseph Schumpeter, reduce democracy to voting are especially concerned to remove considerations of virtue from politics (Schumpeter, 1962, [1942]).² But the notion is not as radical or unrealistic as it might seem when stated in the abstract. Elected city leaders, like national ones, articulate policies aimed at what they claim to be for the good of the city as a whole and correctly assume that voters, or at least a significant portion of voters, are put off by politicians who make no effort to advance such goods.

That many officials turn out to be hypocrites and that many voters look only to narrow self interest does not detract from the fact that virtuous motivation is generally believed to be an important part of civic life and indicates that it is recognized as a goal of citizenship. As to its realization, this is, I think, more easily achieved in city governance than in larger jurisdictions. Urban politics is often less directly tied to national political-party politics. Independent citizen movements in the 1970's such as the Coalition of Progressive Electors in Vancouver, the *Rassemblement des Citoyens et des Citoyennes de Montréal*, and the Stop the Spadina Expressway protests (which morphed into a loose-knit civic movement in Toronto) were explic-

itly formed to promote public goods and sometimes succeeded in electing reform governments.³

A third distinguishing feature of this conception – the import of which will become apparent shortly – is implied in Aristotle's use of the phrase "a life of virtue." Virtue for Aristotle is an integral part of life activities, rather than an abstract norm of behaviour. Nor is it primarily a matter of the possession of civil, political, or social rights, as in the modern treatment of citizenship offered by Marshall (1950). Rather, virtuous activity is implicated in ways of life. In particular, it is part of a life of "happiness," where according to Aristotle this involves the full development of an individual's potentials (III 9, 1280b, lines 39–43).⁴

Two salient aspects of this perspective are a focus on the lives of individuals rather than on the consolidation of traditional or projected imagined communities and Aristotle's view that people possess different potentials. The good city for him is one that promotes the happiness of individuals, and people are or strive to be happy in a variety of ways. One need not, and should not, accept Aristotle's rigid determinism regarding what potentials a person can have, much less his sexist and slavery-condoning deployment of this theory. But stripped of these objectionable features, the two aspects define a perspective on cities that places Aristotle against approaches that look to put citizenship in the service of social cohesion, whether the latter is thought of in the manner of communitarian traditionalism or of the utopian orientation Aristotle saw in Plato's *Republic* and that was to be echoed in subsequent utopian and utopian-inspired urban theory.

Urban heterogeneity

Citizens are certainly expected to share certain values, and in this sense to "cohere." We shall return to the question of what these values are and how they might be inculcated. However, the values are not only or primarily expressions or bonds of a common civic community but means for achieving a good city, where this is measured by reference to individual fulfillment rather than by reference to the preservation of homogenous communities. Aristotle depicts such communities as modeled on the family household and insists that these differ in kind not degree from cities (I 1, 1252a). Moreover, since the individual inhabitants of a city exhibit a wide variety of aspirations (linked to their differing potentials), and since the goal of the city is to promote the happiness of these individuals, one should not expect cities to be unified: "[A] city is not by nature one in that sense which some persons affirm, and . . . what is said to be the greatest good of cities [i.e. unity] is in reality their destruction" (II 2, 1261b, 5–10).

³ The Vancouver movement merged in 2002 with Vision Vancouver, and the *Rassemblement* was reconstituted in the 1990's as the *Union des Citoyens et des Citoyennes de L'île de Montréal*. A progressive mayor and city council was elected from among the leaders of the Toronto protest.

⁴ And see his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1943a [c.350BCE], I 7). In addition to developing one's potentials and being in accord with virtue, happiness is activity in accord with a mean as determined by a man of practical wisdom (the gendered pronoun being unfortunately essential for Aristotle), and it pertains to all aspects of a person through an entire lifetime.

² I review this theory in 2002, chap. 6.

Aristotle's view about unity and the city was not only heterodox in his time, but also challenges modern conceptions. In a recent university course on Cities, I asked its 25 students (of urban design, planning, and political science) to name what each took to be the most severe obstacle to full urban citizenship in Toronto. While some answered what I had anticipated (gentrification, denial of the vote to recent immigrants), a majority identified "multicultural diversity" as the chief culprit. In subsequent class discussion, it became apparent that some meant by this the tendency of members of a new immigrant group to concern themselves exclusively with the affairs of their community (this is indeed a challenge to Toronto citizenship), but most thought that the fact of diversity in and of itself was inimical to citizenship. It is, perhaps, noteworthy that the class was almost entirely made up of new immigrants or their children and that one of the few students from a family of Anglo Protestants in a smaller nearby Ontario city with little ethnic diversity demurred. She saw full citizenship in her city as *impeded* by its ethnic homogeneity, which she regarded as linked to domination by an elite and reactionary clique.

The students echoed a concern expressed by mainstream social theorists of the early 20th Century in Europe, such as Ferdinand Tönnies, that burgeoning metropolises were displacing communities bound together by shared traditions with conglomerations of heterogeneous populations of individuals largely anonymous to one another. Against this orientation were the minority voices of Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin. For them, not only was this transition unavoidable, but it included a positive dimension, as the individual was freed from the oppressive weight of tradition and conformist community pressures. For all the down sides of big city life – bombardment of the senses, the predominance of money as a medium of interpersonal relations, blasé or suspicious attitudes toward others – Simmel celebrated it as liberating people from village life, where they are confined within "such a narrow cohesion that the individual member has only a very slight area for the development of his own qualities and for free activity for which he himself is responsible (Simmel, 2002, [1903])."

In the exploration of urban life and culture that Benjamin draws out of reflections on those Parisian arcades (*passages*) that survived Baron Haussman's razing of the old city, he focuses on the personage of the flâneur as a sort of urban everyman. Anonymous to others and having set aside practical matters to allow for free flow of the imagination in response to city stimuli as an "idle dreamer," the flâneur finds himself (and it must be "him," as a flâneuse would be mistaken for a prostitute) at a crossroads between past and future, where the former is not his personal one but the convergence of diverse traditions that have formed the city ("the flâneur enters a past that is not his own") and the latter is not fixed, but is open to active intervention to be shaped by those in the present ("politics attains primacy over history") (Benjamin, 1999, [1928], pp. 880, 883). This dialectics between past and future, tradition and innovation can only be played out cities, which in the manner of dreams condense a large variety of historical

streams and the futures of which are open to multiple possible interventions.⁵

Urban virtues

An advantage often claimed for a unified urban society is that it coheres around fixed and common values. Of course, this depends upon what the values are. Also, if the common values are based just on tradition then critical thinking will suffer and exclusions deriving from attitudes like homophobia and sexism will be endorsed.⁶ On the other hand, if the common values of the unified city are based on reason, as in Plato's scheme and subsequent utopian ones, then they must either be socially engineered or somehow imposed on a population. The problem of common values is of a different sort for those who see cities as desirably not unified. Part of the diversity internal to such cities is that they will be pluralistic in terms of motivating norms of behaviour. This seems to have been one of the considerations of the students in my class in identifying multicultural diversity as threatening to citizenship. I do not see this problem as insurmountable. A solution is suggested by a comment of Benjamin.

Urban thought about cities in the West has, from ancient times, drawn a contrast between the divine city and the secular one, often conventionally symbolized (however mythically) by Jerusalem, the city of order, and its antithesis, the chaotic Babylon. Benjamin almost certainly had this distinction in mind when at the end of a précis of his study of cities, the *Arcades Project*, he described himself as confronting "not the divinities of Olympus—not Zeus, Hephaestus, Hermes, or Hera, Artemis, and Athena—but the Dioscuri" (Benjamin, 1999, [1928], p. 884).

The Dioscuri were the twin sons of Leda – Castor fathered by a mortal, Pollux fathered by Zeus. This, I take it, is the mix of coherence and incoherent (Jerusalem and Babylon) that Benjamin saw and favoured in cities. As I read this passage, the dialectician Benjamin is here declaring that cities are both coherent and incoherent, and in about the proportion of the Dioscuri, namely three quarters incoherent (hence not conforming to utopian visions) and one quarter coherent. As such, cities contain conflicting features each of which have negative potentialities that, to be counteracted, require among other things commitment to common norms that are, in turn, reflected in urban virtues. These are illustrated in the charts below:

Coherence	Incoherence
Community	Anonymity
Tradition	Individual innovation
But also	But also
Stultification	Consumerism
Closedness	Anomie
Conservatism	Apathy/self-centredness

⁵ This dominant theme in Benjamin's work is well explicated by Susan Buck-Morss (1989), and I discuss its import for radical politics, 2010.

⁶ Progressive theorists of a communitarian bent, such as Alistair McIntyre, Michael Walzer, and (though he does not like to classify himself as a communitarian) Charles Taylor, wish to maintain room for critical thought and reform, and they devise some interesting methods for doing so. But these theorists are not full blown traditionalists and would not disagree with the virtues elaborated in this section of the paper. I discuss this topic with specific reference to democracy and socialist equality in 1994, essay 6.

The problems endemic to urban coherence and incoherence call for a citizenry motivated by values appropriate to each tendency – in the first instance, the values of toleration of differences and of concern for one another.

Civic virtues		
Incoherence	Acceptance of difference	Toleration
Coherence	Commitment to equality	Concern

At one time I thought that these two virtues were all that is required; however, recognition of the vital role that cities must play in addressing environmental problems, prompts adding a third, namely seeing oneself as a trustee of the city in which one resides as opposed to its exploiter.

Civic virtues II		
Incoherence	Acceptance of difference	Toleration
Coherence	Commitment to equality	Concern
Time	Concern for the future	Trusteeship

Preconditions for a virtuous city

On Aristotle's view good cities cannot simply be willed into existence. Certain preconditions are necessary for a city to promote the happiness of its inhabitants. His lists of preconditions are sorted into those which are fortuitous, such as being within certain parameters of territorial size and population and possessed of a large middle class, and those preconditions amenable to deliberate manipulation. Main examples of the latter are construction of public spaces, a certain mix of street designs, ensuring good health, provision of common eating facilities, and maintaining a universal (for boys and non-slaves) public educational system (VIII 1–3). Setting aside some conditions idiosyncratic to the Greek cities of Aristotle's time (such as strong and ornamental walls) and the fact that city states were sovereign entities, his is not a bad list with which to start.

Public education

Aristotle's inclusion in the *Politics* of an extended discussion of education foreshadows the intimate link John Dewey saw between education and democracy (Dewey, 1980, [1916]). Dewey shared Aristotle's view that education should help students to learn and acquire the skills to develop their potentials to the fullest, and he also saw education as vital for developing the virtues needed in a diverse society. Dewey mainly had class and religious diversity in mind, and today ethnic diversity and the variety of values and world views students bring to a school from their homes must be added. Schools can serve as invaluable incubators of the virtues of concern, toleration, and (provided the schools are internally democratic) trusteeship. This requires the right curriculums and instruction, and it also requires that the schools reflect the diversity of the cities in which they are located.

Perhaps, in the face of sexist and racist discrimination, all-girl, all-black, or Aboriginal schools are unfortunate necessities, but from a neo-Aristotelian or Deweyan

perspective they should be seen as such and disbanded as discrimination wanes. Meanwhile, consideration of this precondition for a virtuous city suggests that the trend for a proliferation of class and religion-based private schools in many cities today should be resisted. Also to be resisted is a trend (indeed, more than a trend) toward class and ethnic ghettos within a city, which similarly diminishes the diversity of its public schools.

Public spaces

The prime public space for Aristotle was the Agora, which should be open to everyone and, though mainly a locus for political debate and discussion, also amenable to a variety of uses. In this respect the Agora was to differ from spaces for market exchanges and for religious use. Aristotle's inclusion of this precondition also anticipated contemporary urban theory, much of which is focused on the importance of providing for and protecting public spaces (Beauregard & Bounds, 2000).⁷ Parks, boardwalks, squares, and the like are marked by accessibility, where this means they are non-exclusive and made use of by people from a variety of backgrounds – differentiated by age, class, occupation, and ethnicity – and by people embracing a variety of values and world views. In these spaces each must learn at least to tolerate the others if the spaces are to be useful to anyone. Also, to the extent that people who make use of a public space take some responsibility for it – for instance, by helping to keep it clean and defending it from encroachment as by developers – they begin to acquire a habit of trusteeship.

These potentials also apply to religious and market-exchange spaces, but only if Aristotle's injunction against allowing mixed use in them is violated. Unlike many of his contemporary early modern secular urban designers, Camillo Sitte, saw in the spaces around churches opportunities for enhancing the public life of a city, provided they were open to everyone and to a multiplicity of uses (Sitte, 1986, [1889]). Today, even the interiors of churches have become locuses for public gatherings and serve as community centres, secular as well as religious.

Aristotle's boundary between social/political public spaces and market places (VII 12, 1331a) should also be relaxed. In particular, in and around most large cities the shopping mall has become or could become an important public space. Sometimes this happens spontaneously, and Barber (2001) cites examples of malls in Southern California where citizen campaigns have succeeded in making them into public spaces. At the same time the intuition behind Aristotle's view merits retention. This is the idea that cities should not be viewed in the manner of neo-liberalism and as exemplified in the approach to urban mobility by Tiebout (1956) as primarily market-like interactions among its citizens.

Urban design

Among the discretionary features of a good city for Aristotle were street plans. He endorsed the patterns of

⁷ Citizenship according to Beauregard & Bounds (2000) is almost entirely forged within public spaces. Two more relevant treatments, of several, are Kohn (2004) and the contributions to Kingwell and Turmel (2009).

rectangular grids as prescribed by the leading city planner of Greek antiquity, Hippodamus, but wanted them combined with irregular streets (VII 10,1330b). Of interest here is not Aristotle's specific reasons for favouring this combination (the grid is convenient for the location of houses while irregularities impede enemies from entering a city or strangers fleeing it in time of war) but the idea that urban design and planning can facilitate or inhibit achieving good cities. A grid alone lacks the opportunistic spaces – irregularly shaped green spaces, enclaves for parkettes – that, precisely because of their informal natures, offer especially convenient venues for public interactions. Street configurations of the sort championed by Le Corbusier and infusing all-too-many contemporary cities primarily designed to facilitate automobile circulation inhibit pedestrian interaction and foster an isolationist mentality on the part of occupants of what amount to mobile condominiums (Blanchard & Nadeau, 2007).

Broadening considerations of the design of streets to those of urban design and planning generally, several other potentials can be identified. The original intent of most zoning regulations to demarcate areas of a city by function (industrial, commercial, residential) can be undone to facilitate mixed uses within areas of a city with the result that segregation of people's work, home, and recreational lives is broken down. This helps to bring people from a variety of backgrounds into interaction as opposed to hiding from one another in their houses or apartments, relating to each other outside of them mainly as employees or employers, and recreating in often ghettoized venues artificially separated from home and work. In this category, too, can be placed Aristotle's celebration of common dining facilities (shared with almost all later utopian thinkers – More, Campanella, Bacon, Fourier). Urban design can facilitate (or impede) the proliferation throughout a city of restaurants and cafés at all levels of affordability.

Most generally, urban design and planning might be adoptive to existing patterns of living and working in a city, as Jane Jacobs insists, or they might attempt to force people into preconceived molds, as in the utopian-inspired schemes Jacobs was at pains to resist of Le Corbusier and Ebenezer Howard. A challenge to Jacob's approach may be found in a thoughtful examination of urban citizenship by Richard Dagger. He maintains that because of the size of contemporary cities and the mobility of their inhabitants, there are no longer enough self-contained neighbourhoods or cohesive patterns of work and recreation for planners to accommodate to, and if there is realistic hope for urban citizenship it resides in New Urbanist schemes that try to recreate small town and cohesive neighbourhood life (Dagger, 2000, pp. 30–32).

Contrary to Dagger on this point, and as will be argued below, I do not think that size and mobility must render virtuous citizenship impossible, but if they do, then this would mean that the conditions for this result do not exist in many modern cities, and in the manner of the empirically realistic Aristotle one would simply have to accept this as a lamentable fact. In any case it is doubtful that such citizenship can be created by urban design. I recall a discussion with the designer of Jerusalem's City Hall Square who averred that his design would bring peace to the Middle East. This is an extreme example of the pretense that culture entirely follows built form.

Perhaps if one somehow started with culturally vacuous inhabitants and allowed enough time, something like design-driven culture would transpire, but in real life urban planners and designers are intervening in complexes of interacting processes where they find themselves in already formed cultural (also economic, demographic, environmental, etc.) conditions, which they may be able to influence, but only by taking the conditions into account to encourage some aspects and discourage others. This point was well understood by the most sophisticated of the utopian theorists, Charles Fourier, whose principles for structuring life and work in his Phalansteries built upon what he took as the already existing primary passions (Fourier 1972, [1882], pp. 219–220).

Size

For Aristotle a city should have a large enough population to be self sufficient (that is, with an appropriate division of labour) but not so large as to be ungovernable (V 4). Noteworthy is that he refrains from giving a number, maintaining instead that an optimal size will depend upon the characteristics of a particular city. Thus, one reason Aristotle adduces for avoiding very large cities is that people cannot know and therefore properly select potential leaders, (*ibid.*, 1236b, 10), but in our age of mass communication, larger populations are justified (at least in respect of citizen knowledge) than in Aristotle's time. The general case is that from the point of view of being conducive to urban citizenship, size is less important than access of urban residents to modes of participation in a city's political life and the quality of daily life. With 30 million inhabitants Tokyo is ten times the size of my home city, Toronto, yet citizen engagement and virtuously motivated behaviour, though by no means as evident as Aristotle would like, is not noticeably less developed in the larger metropolis, and in some ways it is more developed. (Or at least so it seemed to me during admittedly limited periods of living there over the past decade.)

One thing that makes this possible is the existence of defined neighbourhoods, each with an adequate complement of commercial and recreational establishments, public spaces, and social services. Identification with one's neighbourhood is relatively strong, and people assume responsibility for maintaining it. This is the situation that Jacobs considered ideal for the vibrancy of a city and constitutes one way that a large city can be, as it were, partitioned, into citizen-friendly units. Dagger's skepticism about whether such neighbourhoods can survive high rates of mobility into and out of them no doubt flags a challenge. But how grave the problem is depends in part on the quality of the neighbourhoods in question. Those that are well provided with shops and cafés, that contain convivial public spaces, and in which there are active citizen groups are conducive to involvement by newcomers, and in fact often more welcoming to them than are small towns, where acceptance is more dependent upon shared traditions and known heritage.

Cities may also be partitioned with respect to political engagement if their governing structures devolve decision-making as far as possible to locales within the city, such as the system of Councils in New York's Boroughs. Most of the students in my class came to Toronto after

forced amalgamation with its erstwhile neighbouring cities by a Conservative provincial government. Were they able to compare the city pre- and post-amalgamation I think that some of them would have designated this as a major obstacle to citizenship. The reason is not primarily that the city's population increased, but that with amalgamation came an increase in ward size with no provision for compensating structures for local citizen political involvement. Community Councils remain, but the last Council meeting I attended amounted to citizens lining up at a microphone to make cases to the councilors whose twelve wards constituted the "community." Five of 70 items on the agenda were gotten to in the one-day meeting.

Class

Aristotle's main reason for thinking that among the fortuitous preconditions for a good city is a large middle class was that middle class people, unlike the "lower" classes, have the ability to govern and are prepared to do so, but, unlike the very rich, they do not covet power. Moreover, the relative equality among members of the middle class means that they are not envious of one another (IV 11, 1295b). In stark contrast are the views of Henri Lefebvre. Contrary to elitist urban reformers, ordinary working people according to him have both the interests and the street knowledge requisite for profound and lasting urban vitalization (Lefebvre, 1996, [1968]).

While the elites advocate startling architectural and high-end entertainment facilities to make their cities world class competitors, working-class people are better situated to understand the urgency of building or rebuilding physical and social infrastructures. While the wealthy see it as in their interests to protect themselves from the effects of poverty or urban squalor (as in gated communities or security-heavy condominiums), it is in the interests of the majority of working people to resist gentrification and to secure affordable social services and accessible public spaces. Lefebvre would certainly agree with Aristotle that equality is conducive to people relating to one another in civically virtuous ways. But, unlike Aristotle, he did not think that class-based inequalities were inevitable. As a socialist, he favoured political action to achieve an egalitarian society.

Lefebvre would also likely disagree with Aristotle's view of middle-class urban aspirations. While there are many middle class people who actively campaign for urban reform, it is doubtful that as a class they have a special aptitude for urban preservation, as no small proportion of urban-dwelling members of the middle class are primarily concerned to protect their up-scale neighbourhoods and support political candidates and taxation policies unfavourable to social equality in their cities. Meanwhile, city politicians and the media are not infrequently surprised by the ability of even relatively poor city dwellers to organize themselves as into tenant associations or anti-poverty movements, which achievements are all the more remarkable because they lack the time and resources available to the middle classes.

Richard Florida's central thesis is that members of what he designates "the creative class" – primarily entrepreneurs – should be lured to cities by encouraging cultural facilities and high-end architecture along with multicultural diversity and an ethic of toleration in order to make

their cities globally competitive. An underlying assumption is that the people thus lured, will also contribute to their cities in a virtuous way (Florida, 2002). Aristotle would have been skeptical of this supposition. For him, the motives for entering into civic enterprises shape their results. A city that caters to economic success on the part of entrepreneurs and highly trained technological experts and that aims at global competitiveness is more likely to yield gentrification, condominiumization, and class-divided neighbourhoods that value toleration only at a distance and that render concern and trusteeship matters of charity and named legacies, rather than publicly supported city policies (Hulchanski, 2008).

The preconditions for virtuous urban citizenship described so far might be called structural. But the civic virtues are motivating values and as such must be internalized within the phenomenological make up of individuals. They must become part of everyday common sense. So still needed is the identification of a cultural "glue" binding people across individual differences and committing them to behaviour consonant with the virtues of concern, toleration, and trusteeship. Typical candidates appeal to people being parts of appropriate communities. Thus, Robert Beauregard and Anna Bounds think that being together in public spaces creates the right kind of citizenship, and Daggar believes such a community might be found in New Urbanist plans. These views have something to be said for them, though it is not a large step from the New Urbanist settlement as envisaged by its champions to their practical instantiation in affluent gated communities. Also, unless one sees people's values as entirely structurally determined, it seems that more is needed.

Friendship

Aristotle's glue was "friendship" (IV 11, 1295b), but this is too strong a requirement to be counted on in a large and diverse city, and in some respects it is not even be desirable. One need not accept Simmel's view that "a slight aversion, a mutual strangeness and repulsion" (p. 15) is ineradicable from city life, to see that the burden of friendship on the part of everyone with regard to everyone else in a city would be constraining. Moreover, it does not serve as a source for the virtues in question. Concern only for friends would leave out helping strangers. Toleration is often exactly toleration of people with whom one has little if anything in common. If trusteeship includes preservation for future generations, it cannot involve friendship, as the recipients are not yet living. Less demanding than full friendship is friendly comportment. Elementary civility, as in apologizing for accidentally bumping into someone, holding a door open, the occasional "good morning," a smile or making eye contact in appropriate circumstances, though not likely sufficient to create a civically virtuous population, can function as something like operate conditioning at least to counteract virtue-defeating attitudes of indifference toward others.

Liberal rights

A popular candidate among liberal thinkers is common subscription to a menu of basic rights. Marshall's view that

there is a progression from elementary civil rights, to political, and finally to social rights is not infrequently cited in this regard.⁸ If rights are interpreted in a strong way to include duties of mutual aid as well as duties not to interfere with others and if rights holders include people in future generations, then internalization of rights as motivating values would prompt behaviour in accord with toleration, concern, and trusteeship.

However, while living in a liberal society, or at least in a society that proclaims commitment to liberal values, probably helps to take the first step toward the progression Marshall sees, it is all-too-evident in present-day liberal societies that the progression is not automatic, neither in policy nor in political culture. Indeed, for nearly three decades neo-liberal policies and propaganda have successfully arrested such progression, and it remains to be seen whether even the dramatic global failure of neo-liberal economic practices will reinstate the social-democratic impetus Marshall saw in liberalism.

Notwithstanding reservation about the potentials of subscription to liberal rights, there may be a respect in which living in a liberal society is conducive to a virtuous urban culture. Simmel saw modern life as infused with two versions of individualism: the Enlightenment view that people are equally bearers of common basic rights and the Romantic reaction against the universalistic side of this view that celebrates individual particularity. It is in the metropolis, Simmel maintained, that the attempt is made to unify these different "ways of defining the position of the individual." The city provides a space where the two "conflicting life-embracing currents find themselves with equal legitimacy" the interplay between which provides "an inexhaustible richness of meaning in the development of ... mental life" (p. 19).

Simmel's observations (if they can be credited, as I think they can) throw into relief aspects of people's orientations toward one another that include at least the germs of the virtues of concern and toleration. At a daily, micro level urban life includes a presumption of equal entitlement. People queued up for a bus or at a supermarket check out line may be distressed to be toward the back of the line, but they do not deny that others are entitled to be ahead of them just in virtue of having gotten there first. With respect to location in the queue, the bus riders or shoppers recognize each other as equals. Usually when walking or driving, one pays little attention to others; they are nothing but interchangeable co-users of a sidewalk or street. Occasionally, however, it occurs to one that an anonymous other person thus encountered is him or herself a unique centre of consciousness, also going somewhere with a purpose and coming from a particular place with all the characteristics a specific work or home life.

When these two stances – the presumption of equality among anonymous others and the understanding that these other persons have lives particular to them – come together, attitudes at an elementary level of concern and toleration are engendered. If a queue crasher knocks somebody ahead of me aside my annoyance or even anger is not only or primarily prompted by the self-regarding

realization that the queue has increased by one person (the queue crasher), but by recognition that the person knocked into has been done a harm and that it has been done, not to a mere place holder, but to full person with whom I can empathize as such, even though knowing almost nothing about him or her. If, moreover, injury has been done by the crasher, even as minor as knocking a briefcase or purse out of someone's hand, I and others in the queue would almost certainly help. This is a germ of the virtuous attitude of concern.

The understanding of individual particularity can sometimes also evince a tolerant stance. If somebody is slow in paying at the cash register, others often (if not always) assume, even in the absence of visual clues, that there is a reason particular to them for this (for instance, needing to count out pennies due to just barely having enough to pay, or having poor eyesight) and tolerate the delay rather than simmering in rage or shouting out that they should hurry. The lesson to draw from these applications of Simmel's view about metropolitan life characterized by respect for both universal individual rights and individual particularities is not that such life guarantees a virtuous citizenry. It is, rather, that there are features of everyday living in a city that can sometimes contribute to the nurturing of virtuous attitudes

This point can be generalized to apply to all the considerations discussed above and to be discussed below. The putative glues of friendly comportment and liberal attitudes, like the structural conditions of provision of public spaces, preservation of neighbourhoods, or political forums like community councils are none of them sufficient to create fully virtuous urban citizenship. There likely is no such one thing, no magic formula. Rather, in certain combinations they may, depending on specific circumstances, contribute to the nurturing of such citizenship. To employ a concept from the philosophy of causation and explicated by Mackie (1976), each is a potential "INUS condition," that is "an insufficient, but necessary member of an unnecessary but sufficient set of conditions" for the production of something.

Civic pride

Though seldom adduced by urban scholars as a source of virtue, it is not uncommon for city politicians to justify expenses for attracting major sporting events to a city or for developers and architects promoting dramatic projects to claim that the fame and notoriety these things will bring to a city will not only produce jobs and attract tourists but also serve as a uniting force in the culture of the city by making its citizens proud of it. To my mind these specific sorts of projects do not create pride so much as bragging rights against what are seen as rival cities, or when they are alluded to as pride-worthy achievements, this is because citizens take pleasure in displaying accomplishments by a city of which they are antecedently proud. Moreover, the lasting and noble significance of many such endeavors is dubious, as the fact that they are often accompanied by public resistance and protests suggests.

Still, I do not think that civic pride should be ruled out altogether as one potential source, in an INUS condition way, of urban virtue. This can be the case when the

⁸ A recent example with many references to others is Somers (2009).

achievements in question are of unquestionable and lasting value, not just for the city that inaugurates them, but for the regions within which they exist and beyond. Examples are the environmental initiatives taken by some cities or efforts to secure (or in Canada to retrieve) programmes of social housing. To the extent that such ventures both garner national and international accolades and exhibit concern and trusteeship, pride in them becomes sutured with these civic virtues in the public mind.

Self interest

Adam Smith wrote of “the civilizing effects of commerce” in a way that links virtue to self interest (Smith, 1976, [1776], Bk. III, chap. iv, p. 449). He mainly had in mind national policies, but the point can be related to the comportment of urban citizens. As Simmel noted, “[the] metropolis has always been the seat of a money economy and the interactions of people in cities is largely mediated by economic markets” (12). These interactions are motivated by self-interest, so Smith’s thesis would conveniently provide a means for introducing virtue into cities.

At the level of individual market exchanges, one can see how this might work. Though, as Smith observed, “it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest,” (*ibid.* I ii, p. 19) it is also in these merchants’ interests to treat their customers respectfully if they want them to remain customers and for the customers to reciprocate if they want good service. Moreover, market interactions provide venues where the friendly comportment between strangers referred to above is appropriate. Making eye contact or exchanging small talk are not threatening or deemed peculiar in such interactions. There are, however, problems with this attempt to wed self interest and virtue. Increasingly, market interactions are not between individual human beings but between a human person and a corporate person. That the greeter at a department store treats a customer respectfully does not at all mean that his or her corporate employer shares this stance.

More profound is the concern of Aristotle in wanting to exclude commerce from the public space of the Agora. A virtuous life for him is incompatible with selfishness and greed (“pleonexia”), and though he rejected Platonic communism on practical grounds, he saw a tendency of economic markets to engender these attitudes. In the service of greed, the pleonexic personality “uses in turn every faculty in a manner contrary to nature” (I 9, 1258a). 20th Century theorists and especially Karl Polanyi and C.B. Macpherson were to share and expand upon this concern. Polanyi saw a development begun in the 18th Century: “[The] institutional gadget, which became the dominant force in the economy—now justly described as a market economy—then gave rise to yet another, even more extreme development, namely as a whole society embedded in the mechanism of its own economy—a market society” (Polanyi 1977, [1954–1969], p. 9).

The culture of a market society is what Macpherson called “possessive individualism” (Macpherson, 1962). This culture includes selfishness and greed, which are obviously not compatible with the virtue of concern, and toleration is only compatible with them if it is costless or if money can

be made from it (as in the commercialization of multiculturalism).

Macpherson’s principal objection to a market society is that in it everything is seen as private property, including people themselves, who regard not just their possessions but their own talents as property over the deployment of which they have absolute discretion. The contrast Macpherson draws is a society in which people regard themselves as the trustees of their possessions and talents, that is, where a culture including the virtue of trusteeship displaces possessive-individualist motivations. Macpherson wanted to minimize or if possible dispense with a market economy, and Polanyi thought that such economies can be waited out as their brutality eventually creates political counter measures in welfarist or social-democratic directions. In my view Aristotle was right about the impracticality of dispensing with economic markets, and Polanyi’s hope, even if realized, could come too little and too late to undo the structural and cultural effects of a market society.

However, this does not mean that the negative consequences of a market economy cannot be reduced and contained. This topic is a large one, but suffice it here to announce the view that what propels a market economy to a market society is largely the fear and insecurity of life in a society where unemployment and insufficient income and other resources to meet more than the most basic needs (and sometimes even them) are realities or imminent dangers.⁹ If a market economy is to be compatible with development of civic virtues then the elements of fear and insecurity need to be actively addressed in the form of such things as a guaranteed annual income, programmes for full employment, secure and adequate pensions, affordable housing, and social services. Evidently, these provisions are incompatible with neo-liberal policies, which is yet another reason why the latter is incompatible with virtuous urban citizenship.

Another way that self interest might be thought to promote virtuous citizenship is to appeal to the long run. It is not hard to show that cities that care for the underprivileged within them, that promote egalitarian social policies, that discourage intolerance, and that act as trustees for future inhabitants are more likely to serve the interests of individual citizens overall and in the long run better than ones that respond only to short-term self interest. Negative examples are seen in the effects of such as White flight, living in fear of crime, or experiencing the effects of crumbling infrastructures. So it might be said that cities where people act in virtuous ways are in the best interests of all their citizens, and it does not matter whether they have adopted the appropriate values, as long as they support virtuous policies.

Such an appeal is exemplified in Florida’s arguments for addressing such things as urban poverty in order to make cities more attractive places for creative entrepreneurs (Florida, 2002, pp. 320–322). However, the approach confronts the famous prisoner’s dilemma problem that even recognizing long term advantages, the self-interested person will rationally calculate that it is best for him or her to act on short-term interests. In my city, for example, this attitude is evident in the current Board of Trade’s endorse-

⁹ I defend these claims in my 2005.

ment of city-preserving policies provided its members are not taxed or otherwise obliged to pay for them.

The prisoners' dilemma pertains to people conceived in a certain way, namely as Hobbes-like atoms, where the individual possesses a basic character sprung (like a mushroom as Hobbes put it) fully formed independently of his or her society and where this character is composed of just two parts: self-regarding desires and the ability to calculate means to satisfy them. An alternative perspective is that of Dewey who viewed individuals as members of overlapping publics. A "public" for him is any constellation of people whose actions affect one another over protracted periods of time and who face common problems that they must address together (Dewey, 1984, [1927], pp. 245–246). Dewey was concerned with national publics, but his views apply as well to urban publics which confront a host of ongoing problems: provision of water, power, transportation, waste removal and sanitation, health-care, law enforcement, jobs, education, facilities for recreation, public spaces, and other such things.

When members of a public recognize themselves as such it is apparent to them (in virtue of this very recognition) that cooperative behaviour is essential for addressing their common problems. Tradition and peer pressure is conducive to such behaviour in publics that are also close-knit communities. But, as Aristotle observed, cities, unlike households or villages, are not communities, so something else is required to bind their citizens together. This is where the civic virtues come in, as they are simultaneously required for and produced by cooperative behavior.

For a Philosophical Pragmatist, like Dewey, this situation is seen not as an impossible contraction but as a potentially spiral-like process that can start modestly and then build on itself. Individual members of a public will never be located at some ground-level beginning of such a process (like the mythical deliberators in social contract theories) but will find themselves located within it, where they are possessed of the evidence of some problems solved as a result of effective collective action and some still in need of solution. In both cases the values of members of the public will be seen as having played or needing to play important roles. This is not to say that everyone internalizes the appropriate values, and the likes of our Board of Trade may still pursue policies that inhibit effective public action. But the case that duty and interest combine is easier to make when addressing people as members of a public facing real problems than as an exercise in abstract moral exhortation directed at people without reference to the publics of which they are parts.

Civic memory

Dagger sees civic memory – "recollection of the events, characters and developments that make up the history of one's city" – as essential to the urban identity of a city's inhabitants and to their engagement in the affairs of their city as citizens. Those who know something of the past of their city and of the contributions past citizens have made to it are disposed themselves to take responsibility for the future of the city (pp. 37–39). He is pessimistic about retaining civic memory in contemporary metropolises, since their size, fragmentation, and the mobility of people

into and out of them "combine to detach us from our surroundings... and lead us to think of ourselves as in the city but not of it" (p. 39).

This pessimism is profound indeed if one sees civic memory as necessary tout court for virtuous civic citizenship. The situation is less grave if civic memory is regarded instead as a potential INUS condition functioning in tandem with other conditions. I believe that it is such especially with respect to the virtue of trusteeship. Benjamin's comment quoted earlier that "the flâneur enters a past that is not his own" is apt. New comers to a city will obviously not have as intimate a connection with its past as those with actual ancestry in it. But this does not mean that they have no interest in that history. In fact, they may be more curious about it and be better placed to see its complexities and value its flourishing than native sons and daughters, who often complacently believe they understand their cities or are partisan to one-sided accounts of its past.

A potential effect of knowing the history of one's city is, as Dagger describes it, to see oneself as engaged as an active participant in an ongoing enterprise. Perceiving the benefits one enjoys in a city thanks to the care and work of its past residents or problems resulting from those in the city's past who did not take responsibility for its future, highlights the importance of trusteeship for ongoing city life and may help to instill this virtue in the motivations of its present citizens.

Concluding remarks

Aristotle's conception of cities highlights three questions that are central to the notion of virtuous citizenship:

- What is the scope of citizenship?
- What opportunities, responsibilities, and activities constitute citizenship?
- What is the value or goal of citizenship?

These questions apply to any domain of citizenship or potential citizenship, and many of the observations above no doubt apply to more than urban citizenship. This is so particularly regarding the paper's endorsement of Aristotle's view that the value or goal of citizenship is to enhance the flourishing individuals, while recognizing the diversity among them. The paper now concludes by noting some ways that urban circumstances are uniquely suited to achieving and deepening virtuous citizenship.

With respect to eligibility, it is easier to enlarge the scope of formal citizenship in a city than in a nation, where such things as lowering the voting age or granting the vote to non-citizen residents require constitutional amendments. Also, as Lefebvre notes, ordinary citizens in a city are well placed to acquire the knowledge and engage in local activities constitutive of robust citizenship. Insurgent-citizenship activities and organization are possible on a regional or national scale, but are much easier to form in urban environments. Cities provide opportunities for direct, hands-on exercises of trusteeship activities. Public education takes place in cities, and the public spaces one can take advantage of on a daily basis are also to be found in them. Simmel aptly notes that it is in cities that a potentially citizenship-nurturing dialectics between the values of

universal equality and the celebration of individual particularity takes place. To be sure, civic memory on a national scale profits from prominence in national celebrations, history books, and the media, but it lacks the concreteness and immediacy of the markers of local history.

To the extent that citizenship is something that must be actively striven for, it is, as Benjamin maintains, a political project, and again cities provide potentially fruitful forums. Local political activity to interject citizen voices into matters of urban design, planning, and social and economic policy is facilitated by neighbourhood associations, citizen movements, and community councils. All the theorists drawn on in this paper have argued that neo-liberal economic and political practices are inimical to urban citizenship. The down sides of neo-liberalism are easier to perceive in cities, where policies based upon it have direct and more or less immediate effects on such as daily transportation, housing, public services, and infrastructure preservation.

A matter not addressed in the paper is the interface between urban and other forms of citizenship. With the exception of the several urban theorists who focus on “global cities” that are putatively making the nation state decreasingly important (Sassen, 2001), and those few who advocate something like return to city states (Broadbent, 2008), this subject is not well treated. My own speculation is that robust citizen engagement and the development and exercise of civic virtues on urban, national, and global levels are potentially mutually reinforcing, but this is a topic for future exploration.

References

- Aristotle (1943a). *Nicomachean ethics*. In Richard McKeon (Ed.), *The basic works of Aristotle* (B. Jowett, Trans., pp. 927–1112). New York: Random House [c.350BCE].
- Aristotle (1943b). *Politics*. In Richard McKeon (Ed.), *The basic works of Aristotle* (B. Jowett, Trans., pp. 1113–1316). New York: Random House [c.300BCE].
- Barber, B. (2001). Malled, mauled, and overhauled: Arresting suburban sprawl by transforming suburban malls into usable civic space. In M. Hénaff & T. Strong (Eds.), *Public space and democracy* (pp. 201–220). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Beauregard, R., & Bounds, A. (2000). Urban citizenship. In E. Islin (Ed.), *Democracy, citizenship, and the global city* (pp. 243–256). London: Routledge.
- Benjamin, W. (1999). *The arcades of Paris*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [1928].
- Blanchard, M., & Nadeau, C. (2007). *Cul-De-Sac: L'impasse de la Voiture en Milieu Urbain*. Montréal: Éditions HélioTropé.
- Borasi, G., & Zardini, M. (Eds.) (2009). *Action: What you can do with a city*. Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture SUN.
- Broadbent, A. (2008). *Urban nation*. Toronto: Harper-Collins.
- Buck-Morss, S. (1989). *The dialectics of seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Cunningham, F. (1994). *The real world of democracy revisited* (Japanese Trans.). Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press. Kyoto: Houritsu Bunkasha.
- Cunningham, F. (2002). *Democratic theory: A critical introduction* (Japanese Trans. (2004)). London: Routledge. Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobo.
- Cunningham, F. (2005). Market economies and market societies. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 36(2), 129–142.
- Cunningham, F. (2010). Triangulating utopia: Tafuri, Benjamin, & Lefebvre. *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action*, 14(3), 268–277.
- Dagger, R. (2000). Metropolis, memory and citizenship. In E. Islin (Ed.), *Democracy, citizenship, and the global city* (pp. 25–47). London: Routledge.
- Dewey, J. (1980). *Democracy and education*, in *John Dewey: The middle works* (Vol. IX). Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press [1916].
- Dewey, J. (1984). *The public and its problems*, in *John Dewey: The later works* (Vol. II). Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press [1927].
- Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class*. New York: Basic Books.
- Fourier, C. (1972). Selections from the *oeuvres complètes de Charles Fourier*. In J. Beecher & R. Bienvenu (Eds.), *The utopian vision of Charles Fourier* (J. Beecher & R. Bienvenu, Trans., pp. 219–220). London: Jonathan Cape [c1882].
- Holston, J. (1999). Spaces of insurgent citizenship. In J. Holston (Ed.), *Cities and citizenship* (pp. 155–173). Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hulchanski, D. (2008). The three cities within Toronto. Web publication www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca, Research Bulletin, Hulchanski 41.
- Jacobs, J. (1992). *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: Vintage Books [1961].
- Kingwell, M., & P. Turmel (Eds.) (2009). *Rites of way: The politics and poetics of public space*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Kohn, M. (2004). *Brave new neighborhoods: The privatization of public space*. New York: Routledge.
- Lefebvre, H. (1996). The right to a city. In E. Kofman & E. Lebas (Eds.), *Henri Lefebvre: Writings on cities* (English Trans.). London: Blackwell [1968].
- Mackie, J.L. (1976). Causes and conditions. In M. Brand (Ed.), *The nature of causation* (pp. 301–344). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Macpherson, C. B. (1962). *The political theory of possessive individualism: Hobbes to Locke*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Marshall, T. H. (1950). *Citizenship and social class and other essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Polanyi, K. (1977). *The livelihood of man*. New York: Academic Press [from essays written between 1954 and 1969].
- Sassen, S. (2001). *The global city*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Schumpeter, J. (1962). *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*. New York: Harper and Row [1942].
- Simmel, G. (2002). The metropolis and modern life. In G. Bridge & S. Watson (Eds.), *The blackwell city reader* (pp. 11–19). Oxford: Oxford University Press [1903].
- Sitte, C. (1986). The art of building cities. In R. LeGates & F. Stout (Eds.), *The city reader* (3rd ed., pp. 413–443). London: Routledge [1889].
- Smith, A. (1976). *An inquiry into the nature of the wealth of nation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [1776].
- Somers, M. (2009). *Genealogy of citizenship: Markets, statelessness and the right to have rights*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tiebout, C. (1956). A pure theory of local expenditures. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 64(5), 416–424.