

Citizenship, Critique and Communication
An Inquiry into the Repoliticization of Social Interactions.

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*To
my father alive in memory
and to
my family living for my care and love*

Acknowledgments

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Abstract

This dissertation elaborates on a critical concept of citizenship departing from a theoretical reconstruction of the normative idea developed in the history of philosophy and displays a critical analysis of the problems implicated in the political exercise of citizenship in the times of neoliberal capitalism. It is assumed that citizenship has suffered from an ongoing phenomenon of depoliticization in modern times, which blocks the political capacities of citizens to submit to their power the social world. Accordingly, the dissertation submits to scrutiny the phenomenon of depoliticization, claiming that it is a social pathology that affects the political interactions and suggests a critical interpretation of how those problems could be overcome.

Following the methodological guidance of contemporary critical theory, the analysis is carried out in two parts that reflect two types of analytical reconstruction: a normative-theoretical and a social-critical. By virtue of that, it is claimed that the autonomy of subjects, seen as the essence of a sustainable normative concept of citizenship, is partially realized in the practices of claiming rights and proposing social conflicts by the agendas of political actors and social movements that oppose the perceived problems taking place in our form of life currently facing many crises.

As a conclusion, the dissertation suggests that the pathology of depoliticization affects the quality of the communication performed in claims that political actors and social movements perform today as representations of their needs, interests and desires. Because of this, a process of argumentation is proposed for political interactions that points out how exactly some political struggles may be more legitimate than others in terms of the type of deliberation they trigger publicly.

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*...] the fire that flares up in all acts of self-legislation
[...] for the political community remains latent in everyday life.*

Jurgen Habermas

Introduction

We live in very pressing and critical times in which human political capacities are at odds with finding sufficient basis, orientation, and outcomes for resolving generalized problems. Our capitalist form of life has entered an intensive period of instability derived from the current unsurmountable irrationality over the extraction of natural resources, the exploitation of labor forces, and the dominance exerted on specific social groups. But, the most striking part of this is that there are no clearly oriented common senses, visible shared collective values and generalized bases of social organization at institutional and common daily life levels to respond to those problems, crises and difficulties. Politics has lost its centered axis on the political systems; it has given away its floor of liberal-representative basis; and it has been detached from the filters of publicly filtered opinions. A politics of the peripheries of civil society reaches out directly to the strategical intentions of populist and outsider politicians, reactionary discourses of hate against the political establishments across the world guide the political will of citizens and an aggressive polarization that simplified political deliberation exonerates the burdens of justification that could any reasonable consensus about a solution.

In accordance with that level of uncertainty concerning the political means for solving our pressing times, contemporary political interactions can be judged as limited, curtailed and diminished. On the one hand, there is an evident process of de-democratization that consists in the visible phenomena of autocratic powers *within* liberal governments (Mechkova, Lührmann & Lindberg 2019), authoritarian groups *within* pluralistic societies (Levitsky y Ziblatt 2019) and severe social inequalities *within* social-democratic constitutional regimes (Mounk 2018) have increasingly flourished in the last decades. Democratic institutions and participatory forms of political agencies have been exposed to an intensified displacement from the practical dynamics of social life (Brown, 2015; Fraser, 2018). On the other hand, social relations themselves have been disturbed by the occurrence of different transformations in social institutions, in the types of interactions, and in the process of communicative exchanges. The systems of the social orders are at odds with

maintaining their connection with the citizens in accordance with the mediating functions of law and the bureaucracy of the state for stabilizing moral expectations (Streeck 2014); mediating technological advances have altered the rhythms of social interactions and modify the patterns of social behavior, communication, labor and production in an unprecedented way (Zuboff 2018); and, cultural logics of our times are branded by the hyperindividualization of the symbolic patterns of social reproduction linked to the values of self-employment, self-governing and self-accountability (Lorey 2015; Brown 2015).

Framed as a context of an advanced historical form of capitalism, this neoliberal age curtails institutions, ideals and values that advocate for the stabilization of political processes based on mutual understating, the orientation of social reproduction in accordance with a principle of common needs, and the grounding conception of human existence based in the sociability and solidarity of the specie (Fraser 2018; 2022). An extremely polarized political spectrum characterizes the main outcome of these plagued with misinformation that nourishes aggression and reactionary solutions for the problems involved and the main practical expression results in the proliferation of authoritarian waves of representation, the far-right promotion of values among social movements and the violence displayed in contemporary deliberations. For social and political theory, the level of social disturbances and crises can be characterized by the most pressing problem of differentiating between legitimate and illegitimate forms of responding to the difficulties of our contemporary form of life. How can we meaningfully distinguish between the performances of a right-wing authoritarian political movement and a left-wing democratic one? How are we to assess their claims displayed and the solutions they sustained based on reactionary agendas or a progressist ones? Which normative criterion can be employed to scrutinize the interpretation of the needs, interests and desires that move citizens to support any of the movements?

Those questions implicate the consideration of two sets of theoretical presuppositions that guide my general concern for writing a dissertation about a critical inquiry into the political interactions of our contemporary times. Firstly, I suggest that the social problems and crises reflected in the insufficiencies of the current political realm to offer solutions should lead to the scrutiny of an idea of citizenship that can reveal the given general status

of the political interactions in our times. Therefore, I claim here to detach those questions from other general theoretical frames and sharply narrow defined paradigms of social scientific scrutiny from which they can also be attained, such as, for instance, the theory of social movements, the theory of democracy and the fields of subaltern studies. As I hope it is well justified and sustained in the first part of my dissertation, approaches linked to any of the mentioned theories and paradigms skip the reconstruction of the normative core of concepts that we need today in order to find comprehensive theoretical analyses with critical insight in the field of politics. As a result, theoretical analyses that involve pressing historical problems are restrictively framed in terms of pure immanency (Negri & Hardt 2001) or pure normativity (Rawls 1995), biasedly idealized from a perspective attached to the history of the institutional opportunities and resources developed in the global north (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly 2006) or to a relativistic perspective that ontologizes contingent practices allocated at the other side of the parameters of western thinking or on outside of western history (Spivak 2016).

Thus, my first point of departure is that the social problems can be scrutinized from the political interactions with the focus on the discussion of a theory of citizenship that is not restricted but very aware of the social-historical conditions that defined any of the political analyses at stake and the need for a source of normative inquiry capable of reflecting a level of way out of the problems. For the case of my purposes, I seek to sustain a theoretical analysis of citizenship that can be both sociologically informed by the results of the contradictory dynamics of Capitalism and normatively oriented in accordance with the idealized guidance of the core elements of political ideas such as the political autonomy and self-legislation contented in the modern idea of citizenship.

As my second point of departure, I assume that there is an essential link between the social-historical problems that we face in our times with the labels mentioned above *and* the political interactions that must consistently and systematically connect to provide a reliable theoretical approach. Such implies the epistemological and methodological assumption of a *critical theory* that offers an explanation of social-historical problems with the means of a diagnosis of the social pathologies at stake at the same time that can retain the emancipatory

potentials of certain ideals linked to a practical dimension of the current times of human life. Then, I also claim here to judge the scope of my intentions beyond other contemporary epistemological and methodological approaches that seek to ground support for the social and political ontologizing of existing logics and given practices identified as current potentials for the solving the problems linked to our totality form of life under capitalism (Laclau, Mouffe, Deleuze). My second assumption also implies that the essential link between social-historical problems and political interactions overlying a theoretical reflection imposes an analysis that moves beyond the burdens of proof inherited from the empirical-analytical model of research in social sciences -such as the common basis guiding the theory of social movements-, the predefined intentions present in models of social phenomenology that depart from specific cases -such as the approaches that seek to generalized cultural experiences from the margins or the otherness of reason in contemporary social sciences- and the mere skepticism and relativism that governs deconstructive and genealogical models of ideals, practices or institutions -such as the models of the sciences of spirit that follow up the postmodern and poststructuralist relativism of history and radical contextualism of philosophy-.

Accordingly, my second point suggests that the paradigm of critical theory is the only basis capable of connecting the given socio-historical problems in a way that it can be reflective enough to move around the available sources of normative idealizations (latent in the idea of citizenship) in order to provide a comprehensive model for the problems and be attuned with certain moral expectations of the subjects involved in interactions. Thus, I seek to apply a critical-reconstructive approach that works at two levels: on the one level of formalization of the normative content of the ideal of citizenship and the other level of social diagnosis of pathologies. As a result, the critical-reconstructive approach could offer a tentative identification -by analytical distinction- of the emancipatory sources latent in certain phenomena or practices. Such provides an insight into the dynamics of contemporary political interactions that is critically well-sustained.

Therefore, by offering an analysis that couples citizenship and critique in one single reflection that concerns the contemporary political interactions with a few remarkable

findings about its blockages and possibilities, I can contribute to the discussion of the field of social and political theory with a perspective that offers advantages in front of other rival contemporary approaches (such as the mentioned above).

The main advantage I offer here is an analysis that upholds both a logic of immanence and a logic of transcendence of political interactions. This is something unbalanced in the field of social and political theory today -As Maeve Cooke (2006b) and even Cristina Lafont (2020) would well support-.

I also sustained an analysis that does not defines its scope from an empirical-analytical assumption that in accordance with its positivistic commitments, abstracts the material conditions of reproduction of a phenomenon and curtails the possibilities of interpreting pre-theoretical experiences that might reflect the damaging effects of the capitalist form of life -As Honneth (2007) and also Habermas (1971; 1990) claim against the empirical-analytical models of social sciences-.

Moreover, I commit my effort to interpret the contradictory implications of our form of life that are reflected in a portion of the practices linked to the world of the political interactions of contemporary citizens. Likely to this point, I also invest in favor of the possibilities of a normative ethical commitment and political engagement in contrast with the common overlook of postmodernist and post-foundational ontologizing political perspectives that neglect those possibilities by their rejection of metanarratives and their skepticism towards universal ethical principles -As McCarthy (1991; 1994) has analyzed-.

Lastly, I try to follow here a model of communicative and intersubjective rationality that gives critical attention to the likely moral expectations of those who are involved in political struggles -As Fraser (2013) remarkably assigns to the tasks of a critical theory and Cooke (2006b) declares as an axiom of the situated rationality of the communicative paradigm-. This is something that even the most committed perspectives to the defense of excluded and subaltern practices of resistance do not uphold correctly and end up idealizing the claim of particular social groups without a rational judgment of the real chances that any

practice of resistance (with an emancipatory potential) could have in accordance with the given.

Based on all those issues, the thesis I aim to submit into a critical inquiry is that citizenship suffers from extreme depoliticization in our contemporary times. This implies, on the one hand, that citizenship is the label for the political capacities that humans possess for submitting into their power the issues that concern their social existence, and on the other hand, the social-historical dynamics of our capitalist form of life have blocked such capacities. Accordingly, the display of my predicament directly challenges certain common assumptions that have led me to propose a particular structure and plan for the exposition. But before exposing this plan, I call attention to the two most significant academic challenges that my thesis performs: first, defining citizenship as simple as realizing the modern principle of political autonomy. This goes against existing common associations of the notion of citizenship to mere participation, legal or ethnic membership and the right to have rights. And my second challenge consists of *conceptualizing depoliticization* as a negative condition of human freedom that curtails the chances of making common political will from daily social interactions. This expands the scope of comprehension of the political crises in which we live today and summons a critical perspective to explain the causes.

I can sustain the thesis of depoliticization of citizenship because of the perspective of contemporary critical theory I employed in this dissertation. In accordance with the standards of the reconstructive analysis that -since Jürgen Habermas- has provided an epistemological and methodological approach to critical-hermeneutics (Habermas 1985; 1998; Gaus 2013; Iser 2017; Pedersen 2008; McCarthy 1993; Honneth 2009; Baynes 1989) the contributions and challenges of follows:

First, I reestablish the model ideal of the idea of citizenship and formalize its normative content in the sense that it results in a rational standard for *judging* its (partial) historical realization(s) and *fixing* the force of transcendence implied in the concept. On the one hand, for the reconstruction of the modern critical genesis of the idea, I reveal that the sources of the ideals of practical autonomy and self-legislation that must count for a more coherent idea of modern citizenship stem from the critical tradition of subjective freedom of

Kant, Hegel and Marx. On the other hand, for what concerns the formalization of the concept of citizenship that we can use to analyze critically the current historical times that mediate the realization of citizenship, I synthesize the contemporary discussions around the notion of political autonomy that fuel social conflicts and the recognition of rights in our cotemporary times.

Second, I also grant support for my thesis and the challenges it portrays by using the standards of contemporary critical theory by assessing in a critical-historical fashion the status of the normative content of the idea of citizenship in our current times of neoliberal capitalism. Within this particular scope of my argument, I can provide an account of the social pathology of political interaction caused by the blockages of the communicative capacities of citizenship to make common-autonomous political will and its likely chances for overcoming such damages inflicted by our historical-form of capitalism.

Thereupon, I give support to the challenges again existing accounts of citizenship by employing a perspective that remarks its content beyond its assimilation to an ideal standard of participation, fixed terms of legal and ethnic membership and the abstract claim to the right to have rights, and, at the same time, that serves to a critical assessment of the contemporary realm of political interactions that is sociologically informed and keeps normatively oriented.

Seeking support for what my thesis and its challenges aspire, I have encountered serious difficulties in my exposition that I hope the reader can follow by the upcoming remarks on my strategy. I divided the text into two parts that fulfil the methodological guidance of contemporary critical theory consisting of two kinds of reconstructions: normative-theoretical and social-critical. The first part (Chapters 1-2) is dedicated to the history and the normativity of the idea of citizenship with the aim of giving support to the definition of citizenship on which I have asked for distinction. Thus, after reconstructing the history of the idea of citizenship up to the modern times and its detours in the context of contemporary social and political theory in Chapter 1, the normative core of the ideal of citizenship that we can uphold today is sharply defined by virtue of a formalized concept that *retains* and *qualifies* its two sources of realization allocated in social conflicts and the

recognition of rights. Chapter 2 develops this formalization by discussing a few of the most prominent interpretations of the idea of citizenship as the realization of political autonomy that propose social conflicts for achieving the legal entitlements and provision of rights *and* -in the same proportion- that seeks to obtain ethical recognition of the moral claims involved by reflecting within its content critique against the given socio-historical form of neoliberal capitalism. As implicated in the scope of the discussions I develop in the normative reconstruction of these two chapters, I call for the necessity of a communicative paradigm of citizenship that attends to the premises mentioned below in this introduction.

The second part (chapters 3-4) aims to diagnosis of the current status of citizenship by following the paradigm of social critique that seeks to reveal the causes and motives of the blockages produced on human freedom by the given historical form of capitalism. Thus, in Chapter 3, I propose to consider the losing of the political capacities of contemporary citizens as a practical phenomenon of depoliticization of social interactions. After recognizing that the current historical form of neoliberal capitalism performs specific negative effects on social interactions that curtail the political capacities of citizens, this phenomenon can be submitted to the critical scrutiny of the diagnosis of its causes, the negative implications of its performances for human freedom and a suitable theoretical frame for the likely treatment of its damaging and blocking results. To do so, I also assumed the theory of communicative action to carry out all those tasks and achieved the level of practical-normative implications that I hope to have disclosed in Chapter 4. In this last section, the analysis turns into the explanation of a counterbalancing political account labeled as a conception of the *repoliticization* of contemporary social interactions. This chapter centers the discussion on the idea of deliberative representations of the good life that, following the premises of the process of making communicative power, can open the path towards a critical-normative conception of politics against the neoliberal effects inflicted to the capacities of citizens to produce common political will.

As can be evidenced, I rely on a communicative paradigm of social and political theory that I sustain as the right one for achieving the goal of supporting my thesis and avoiding the problems that other paradigms of social and political theory encounter. The

communicative paradigm follows the work of Jürgen Habermas along with the critical remarks, corrections and further developments made by authors such as Axel Honneth, Nancy Fraser, Seyla Benhabib, Cristina Lafont, Albrecht Wellmer, Thomas McCarthy, Maeve Cooke and Amy Allen. The axis of the communicative paradigm of social and political theory followed here mainly implied that for the contemporary problems reflected in the idea of citizenship several premises must be assumed, such as:

- A two-level model of social and political reproduction that defined the dynamics of a historical form of capitalism as a concrete totality (institutions and agencies).
- Two types of sociological analysis of action that make the field and the scope of the analytical object (instrumental action and communicative action).
- A perspective of a situated, pragmatic and critical rationality that gives predominance to the communicative claims and normative expectations of the subjects involved in social interactions.
- A dialectical view of context-dependance and context-transcendence of the claims raised in communicative interactions by citizens that aims to avoid epistemic authoritarianism, a vantage point of view of the critique of practical realizations and keeps normatively oriented.

All in all, as mentioned, the communicative paradigm that has been assumed in this dissertation has been submitted to a degree of correction in accordance with several flaws listed here:

- the problem of the allocation of power in the symbolic and material reproduction of the *lifeworld*;
- the appearance of a strong transcendentalism that it has hinted;
- the support that it has offered to pure models of deliberative, consensual and procedural politics;
- and the charges of ethnocentrism it has received.

To clarify the communicative paradigm in front of these problems, I have remarked and reconstructed in several parts of the dissertation the premises of a more contextualized,

weaker, radically pragmatic and historicized conception of the communicative rationality that is commonly ascribed to the general theory of Habermas. I hope this constellation of referential premises can enlighten the horizon of the dissertation I have proposed around the problem of citizenship.

Also linked to that, I have assumed the predominance of an abstract theoretical analysis in most of the length of this text, but, in accordance with the reasonable expected empirical-political implications for the problem I dealt with, I have included a few of empirical examples and practical images of related cases. I have done this with the main goal of providing some guidance and contextualizing a framing for theoretical aspirations. I focus on the abstraction level due to my understanding of the degree of education I aspire to prove proficiency and the standard premises of the theoretical tradition that I aim to gain competence. Because of that abstract focus, I consider achieving important findings in every research chapter.

In Chapter 1, the reader can appreciate my claim to the idea of citizenship that organizes a very complex and highly disputed evolution of the very old idea of citizenship. I offer a history that thematizes the classical traditions (Liberal, Republican, Political Liberalism, Communitarianism and Neorepublican), identifies fields of research (Normative-theoretical and empirical-descriptive), and classify models (classical-political, juridical, social) of the idea. In addition, the reader can appreciate the effort to find a core of normativity beyond the commonly assumed definitions of citizenship in political and social theory by disclosing the specific parts of the work of the key thinkers of critical modernity (Kant, Hegel and Marx) on the subject of citizenship.

In Chapter 2, the formalization of the contemporary concept of citizenship by means of the formulation of a double-edged nucleus of rights and conflicts stands as one of the most significant results that this work could offer to the theoretical discussion of citizenship. Nevertheless, the examples presented in the last part can also confirm the accuracy of the main discussion elements of the dissertation and provide key normative guidance for answering the practical questions that oriented the research.

In Chapter 3, I elaborated a considerable theoretical formulation of the problem of depoliticization that grants social-historical accuracy, upholds the importance of a critical theory perspective and expands the scope of utility of the theoretical work of Jürgen Habermas. The precise engagement with Habermas also acknowledging its limitations about the problem of power in social relations leads to the remark on a necessary critical account of power as systematically distorted communication that makes compatible his normative character with Foucault's descriptive insights of the phenomena of power relations.

Chapter 4 suggests a contribution to the critical inquiry into the field of political theory by identifying the features of an account of the repoliticization of citizenship within the scope of the theory of deliberative politics and its normative implications for the qualification of the current neoliberal political interactions. By concentrating the normative analysis on the process of making communicative power and connecting the practical means of the political representations of the good life of the citizens as part of the political deliberations, I hope to have established the basis of a conception of politics that aims high and grants a future development of a critical theory in the field.

These developments and findings of my thesis allow me to establish how the capacities for making common political will of contemporary subjects have been undermined by the negative effects inflicted by our current historical form of capitalism. In that sense, citizenship is currently depoliticized because the objective dynamics of our form of life curtail the political autonomy that subjects can realize in social interactions by means of their communicative competence to engage in deliberations and produce common agreements. This indicates a loss of freedom fueled by the deep-seated encroachment of capitalist imperatives that colonize life in the capacity of the subjects to identify themselves and political agents capable of acting in concert for submitting into their powers the issues of common concern, the problems of generalized pressure and the factors of instability in crises. But, that also suggests a loss of meaning that neoliberalism has deepened in such a way that the communicative capacities for meaningfully engaging in political interaction.

In accordance with that, I here suggest analyzing citizenship under neoliberalism as a currently ongoing practice of social interactions that is governed by systematically distorted communication. This blockage inflicted to human freedom occurs as a social pathology that penetrates communication, undermining its validity basis and producing the impoverishment of processes of political deliberation. As its last and most harmful consequence, the blocking powers of neoliberal capitalism in communication attack the cognitive motivations of citizens to engage in justificatory processes of argumentations of their political claims and enclose the chances to arrive at a common agreement about the problems that should be resolved today.

That theoretical contribution implicates a productive source of interpretative means for the political interactions of our times. Those developments are capable of revealing that the political autonomy inscribed as the essence of a sustainable normative concept of citizenship is partially realized in the practices of claiming rights and proposing social conflicts by the agendas of political actors and social movements that opposed the perceived problems taking place in our form life in crisis. Accordingly, it is difficult to envision how exactly an agenda of opposition and contestation could get further enough to produce the necessary change.

As mentioned, the pathology of depoliticization affects the quality of the communicative claims that political actors and social movements perform today as representations of their needs, interests and desires. Because of this direct reference to the process of argumentation in political interactions, this thesis can elaborate on how political claims can be differentiated as legitimate and illegitimate based on the type of deliberation they publicly motivate. I, therefore, recall judging the legitimacy of a political claim that can be seen today in physical and virtual spaces across the world by the force of transcendence it can provide for the possible inclusions and articulation that the claim can invite, for the given context of necessity form which it departs and for the ways that it can reflect a systematic problem that is linked to the current form of production and accumulation of capitalism.

PART I – HISTORY AND NORMATIVITY

Chapter I – Participation, Membership, and Beyond: Citizenship in the History of Political and Social Ideas

Citizenship has a long history as a common political topic in the philosophical tradition, from *Aristotle* up to the different political interpretations of modernity in the constructions of *liberalism* and *republicanism*. Contrasting definitions have been offered considering the subject's position and function in society's political realm through history. The variety of definitions of citizenship in the history of ideas implies a set of normative assumptions that acknowledge the given socio-historical contexts, the particularity of their institutionalized events, and the social actors' needs. The protracted development of the idea is evidence that citizenship is a key concept in the history of social and political theory and a crucial idea in which general comprehension of human existence can also be reflected. Consequently, citizenship still appears today as a common category for analyzing and portraying a variety of topics concerning contemporary discussions around membership to a State, civic behavior, and social justice. Moreover, many empirical social problems are formulated in terms of what citizenship “is” or “ought to be” based on legal, cultural, and political conflicts produced and aggravated by the historical dynamics of the past and present centuries. This is remarkably reflected in the countless appearance of notions since the midst of the twentieth century, such as integrated citizenship, differentiated citizenship, cultural citizenship, social citizenship, postnational citizenship, subaltern citizenship, ecological citizenship, and feminist citizenship (among many others).

Arguably, all that makes citizenship a complex subject and the vast plurality of literature produced in both the fields of political philosophy and social sciences attest to it; but, more importantly, it is that citizenship remains a highly problematic idea. On the one side, the actuality of all of the classical political traditions¹ and their unwavering commitment to assimilate the concept of citizenship with a manifold of abstract ideas such as national

¹ Machiavelli, Rousseau, Locke, Mill remain as the philosophical background of the contemporary theories of citizenship to be found in the Neorepublicanism authors such as G. A. Pocock, Q. Skinner, and P. Pettit, the Communitarism of M. Walzer, D. Miller, and C. Taylor, and the Political liberalism of J. Rawls.

identity, political obligation, individual rights, or cultural values in the times of globalization, the crisis of political representation, extreme inequality and forced migrations do not contribute to making a clear concept of citizenship, but that usually results in misleading outcomes concerning the conceptual apprehension of the idea of citizenship. On the other side, in the case of the existing literature departing directly from dynamics of misrecognition, exclusion and discrimination reproduced in contemporary societies, the atomization and dispersion of the analyses linked to the available studies limit the possibility of articulating the normative-practical claims in a meaningful idea of citizenship. The recurrent logic of adding a term symbolizing the practical problems that should be corrected (difference, postnationality, subalternity, ecology, among others) to the general classical notion of citizenship not only indicates ambiguity in the concept itself but also suggests that there might be contradictions in those contemporary formulations. Thereby, the point of departure in this dissertation is that, currently, citizenship is a very intriguing idea lacking transparency and definition. It expresses more obscurity than clarity regarding its conceptual accuracy and the practical problems formulated within its scope in the last decades.

The idea of citizenship has been represented in a manifold of political and social categories that define a subject's status, situation, and condition regarding its relationship with a specific historically established political community. Accordingly, the structure, functions, dynamics, and relationality of every concrete historical-form of a given social world have shaped the definition of citizenship. Acknowledging the existence of many historical works about the idea of citizenship², in this chapter, I seek to elaborate on a conceptual history as a starting point to provide a well-founded basis for the upcoming discussion concerning the need for a critical theory of citizenship. The specific aim here is to clarify the theoretical context of problematization that can be found in the philosophical discourse of citizenship that supports most of the contemporary notions and sustains many of the assumptions in the sociological field of citizenship studies. The general intention of the chapter is to argue that any stable idea of citizenship relying on foundationalist

² Smith (1999), Costa (1999), Heather (2004), Bosniak (2008), Mindus (2014), Schnapper (199), Sommers (2008), Isin (2002).

conceptions of the human being, natural order, the imaginaries concerning nationality, and the legal normativity lies behind the rising of a modern principle of subjective freedom that reinstates the idea of citizenship as the capacity to actively submit the social institutions to the will of autonomous subjects. This aim includes a general historical reconstruction of the mainstream philosophical ideas of citizenship aligned with the general hypothesis of my entire project, claiming a critical theory of citizenship. Such a hypothesis stands as follows: the concept of citizenship has been deprived of the core content of its meaning that indicates the exercise of a political autonomy capable of transforming social relations.

As argued throughout the first part of this chapter, the conceptual tendency towards a meaning that suggests exercising a political capacity to tackle the problems engendered in the social dynamic of a political community can be traced back to the ancient world. I do not suggest that the critical notion of citizenship that can be disclosed from the critical tradition of enlightenment -as I assume in this dissertation- is already there in ancient times, but I find it interesting that a kind of phenomenon suggested in Aristotle's *Politics* -and in a sense follow by Hannah Arendt- in close relation to the ideas of participation and the politicization of, or beyond, the *oikos* indicate a well-sustained source of speculation for an idea that would gain its full potential in modernity and suffer from decay as a political notion during contemporary times of late capitalism. The reconstruction of what is called here *the classical-political model of citizenship* serves my argumentative purpose of showing that the politico-philosophical sources of two more models of citizenship (a *legal* one and a *sociological* one) that emerged in modernity as the central paradigms of citizenship promote a *non-political* idea of citizenship deprived of its content. Thereupon, theoretical elaborations and assumptions linked to citizenship that do not correspond with the free participatory character of the political being and the practical capability of deciding over the given status of social relations could be retrospectively judged as *non-political* in such a sense. I, therefore, begin with a long story that seeks to track the fortunes of the idea of citizenship, aiming to disclose a few landmarks of a political practice that has been -in the mentioned sense- deprived of its realization from the perspective of a strong normative conception of citizenship that will be clarified in the forthcoming chapters. For what it is implicated in this

one, I aimed to seek plausibility to the statement that the non-political ideas of citizenship can be measured by definitions stemming from different types of abstract reasoning that displace, assimilate, or hypostasized the politicizing activity of the members of a political community by means of *other* normative categories that do not refer to this human capacity.

Consequently, the conceptual history presented here has the double objective of supporting the general hypothesis of the work and justifying the need for a critical conceptualization of citizenship that will be argued in the forthcoming chapters³. Although aside from supporting and justifying a forthcoming conceptualization of citizenship that claims its repoliticization in both theoretical and practical terms, this chapter has the indirect objective of challenging the skepticism of several authors in the field of *citizenship studies* regarding the definition of citizenship. For many of the distinguished scholars in the field, it is extremely difficult -even impossible, as Pietro Costa (1999) argues- to arrive at a concept of citizenship in philosophical terms. For others, as Patricia Mindus (2014), it is a redundant task since it is just a notion that, in modern terms, indicates a variable function concerning the political institutions and the community. For many others, seeking a general comprehension of citizenship is unnecessary since it is still a legal institution dependent on what the national orders locally rule (Grosso 1997; Costa 1999; Miller 2000; Janosky 1998). Moreover, for another group of scholars, the vagueness of the idea is even seen as a positive trait because the idea's emptiness is an advantage for many practical-political claims (Schnapper 2000; Dauvergne 2009; Mindus 2014). Hence, this chapter also introduces a

³ Then, this is a work on citizenship that departs from the vast arena of scrutiny of the term to establish a reflexive approach. It does not simply aim to increase knowledge –as Horkheimer (1937) proclaimed for all forms of traditional theory- by creating new categories of citizenship and correspondingly argue that one of the modern or ancient normative political models of citizenship is the most adequate one. Neither it is –at least at first instance- the goal to support any practical or political endeavor as it is implied in different very known concepts of citizenship. The aim of my work is to determine the critical-political implications contained in an idea of citizenship extracted from its own historical reconstruction. Accordingly, I seek to claim for the realization of its radical content within the present historical conditions and to offer a concrete idea about its theoretical and practical scope in accordance with those premises. Thus, I assume that the concept of citizenship is need of a repoliticization capable -at the same time- to illuminate the repoliticization of the practical circumstances in which that idea is implicated. This is another reason for why political action is placed at the center of the work.

critical perspective capable of performing as a concept of citizenship, acknowledging the intricate, fussy, and highly disputed arena of citizenship studies.

Moreover, this chapter intends to organize a variety of subjects that increase the complexity of the topic in the specialized literature in a coherent argument. Regarding citizenship, there are debates around the nature and evolution of the national states and their capacity to provide the status of citizenship and other kinds of entitlements and provisions. Human rights are commonly associated with the claim of citizenship in local and transnational political orders. Moral duties and values are also often implied in debates about the problem of identity ascribed to citizenship by several contemporary analysts. Indeed, these are all demanding topics interrelated with the idea of citizenship and challenging to grasp in an inquiry into its meaning. However, I assume it has become problematic because most literature pursues a positive definition of citizenship to offer analytical and empirical insights.

For this reason, theoretical endeavors tend to be overwhelmed when dealing with the long history of the idea, the different levels of abstraction and formulation, and the variety of academic sources and philosophical traditions. In contrast, a formal presupposition such as one that implies that the idea that citizenship has constantly been subjected to socio-historical dialectics in which the real capacities of practical subjects to submit to their powers, their social lifeworld of institutions, discourses, and relations can be seen as diminished or enhanced could lead to a fruitful analytical enterprise. Thus, I sustain later that such a proposition requires the epistemological and methodological means of socio-historical and critical-normative reconstructions as its paradigm to provide a well-established understanding of an idea of citizenship that upholds a definition and its historical contradictions.

Accordingly, in the first part of this chapter, I present the principle of political action underlying the idea of citizenship based on a historical view of the Greek world and the philosophical insights offered by Aristoteles in the Book III of *Politics*. As hinted, the goal is to extract and assume from the beginning of this entire dissertation that any notion of citizenship that avoids socio-historical foreclosures and normative shortcuts maintains its

conceptual attachment to the axis of participation and its politicizing capacity that affects the given socio-historical world of practices and relations (I). However, as stated, this meaning has been obscured by different abstractions elaborated in the philosophical tradition of modern politics in which such a classical political model of citizenship leaning on participation and politicization is obscured. Thus, the second part of the chapter aims to validate this by showing how the abstraction of such a view of *participatory politicization* is carried out by installing a paradigm of *political membership* that reflects the well-known ideas of the republican and the liberal tradition of political theory (II). Afterward, the third part reconstructs what follows the chapter's general argument as a kind of theoretical revitalization of subjects' politicizing capacity linked to citizenship since ancient times. This could be indirectly considered by reading the founding reflections of the social-philosophical discourse reflected in the critical tradition of modern subjective freedom as a project of grounding autonomy concerning the social circumstances that meet its realization halfway. As shown, this specific problem is directly reflected in concrete conceptual figures such as the *active citizenship* of Kant, the *constitutional patriotism* of Hegel, and the *human emancipation* and the *political revolution of the proletariat as the universal subject* of Marx (III). Lastly, the chapter concludes with an outlook on the contemporary theoretical landscape concerning the problem of citizenship in a clear line of thought that assumes the instability of the notion and its rootedness in social conflicts. This last part of the theoretical revision in the history of political ideas establishes the critical-normative contours of the idea of citizenship floating around a few of the most prominent contemporary reflections of politics. By this, it can be said that some of the current political theories that assume the normative implications of the idea of citizenship reflect a displacement of its content linked to the foundational axis of participation and politicization towards new forms of claiming and attaining freedom and equality by different social groups.

I. The foundational axis of participation and politicization. On the classical-political model of citizenship.

On the origins of political citizenship

Citizenship became a highly debated topic following the developments of a sociological model inaugurated by the famous essay *Citizenship and Social Class* written by T.H. Marshall in the twentieth century⁴. Ever since, many other authors have contributed to stabilizing a contemporary canon, including new social concerns and topics capable of enhancing an old prevailing legal model of citizenship. As Patricia Mindus (2014) examines, there have clearly been two dominant models of citizenship disputing its definition since the last century, a sociological and a legal one, and the former has recently displaced the latter. The current field of citizenship studies inspired by Marshall's view on citizenship certainly goes beyond direct definitions of citizenship that emphasize the guiding ideas of national identity supported by the State's sovereignty and solely the rights guaranteed by its coercive authority. The contemporary canon for citizenship was established on the basis of the developments of cultural and social studies inspired by problems of marginalization, inequality, and discrimination in the societies of the global north. However, the theoretical standards of social citizenship shared with the legal models of citizenship tend to overlook the political content that the long-standing validity of the idea in the history of political ideas and the political practices inspire and support.

Citizenship first and most prominently appeared as a rich and profound political theme in the ancient world⁵. In the political model inherited from the ancient world, citizenship is revealed in the middle of a constellation of concepts referring to public relations, comprising the most important decisions for the political community and asserting who and how must rule. For Aristotle, citizenship is the status of being part of a city and sharing with others the experience of a good life -which is itself the constitutive element of the city-. For every citizen to deserve this title, she must acknowledge the need to participate with others in public positions -such as judicial and political offices. In Aristotle's terms: "The citizen in the full sense cannot be better defined than participation in judicial or political office" (Book III, Chapter 1-1275a 22-23). And:

⁴ See the reconstruction of the impact and explanations in Heather (1990); Kymlicka and Norman (1994); and Turner (1997; 1993).

⁵ See Pocock (1995), Bellamy (2008); Costa (1999), also a few references in Walzer (1989).

He who has the power to share in deliberative or judicial office of any state is said by us to be a citizen of that state; and speaking generally a city is a group of such persons adequate for a self-sufficient life (Book III, Chapter 1-1275b 19-21).

A principle of political action

In the philologically complicated context of the Book III of *Politics*⁶, Aristotle established a political model of citizenship in which it is implied that citizens were permanently involved in political affairs and their participation could directly influence public life. Therefore, citizenship rested on an idea of *praxis* capable by its own nature to affect the organization of society. For Aristotle, this political action was performed in an assembly (*ekklesia*) that naturally displayed as a *political body*. Thus, in light of the political model of citizenship inaugurated by Aristotle, citizenship is implicated in the realization of political action through participation in the judicial and the ruling office. Accordingly, Aristotle uses the word *krisis* for the citizen's involvement in the function of the administration of justice and *arche* for the participation in the function of government or ruling the city⁷. There lies a *functional* distinction, but it does not create a problem for the core definition of citizenship signaling political action through participation in judicial and ruling tasks. However, the possibility for the citizen to display such political condition as part of the political body, by participating in both functions, indicates that the definition of citizenship lies on a more fundamental level.

Following Mulgan (1990), the two functions of citizenship can be indeed assimilated to the common point of a conjecture of deliberation and coming together in the assembly (*ekklesia*), and, in his philological analysis, Barker (1946) more accurately says that the meaning of *arche* retains a more general sense than the word *krisis*; thereby, the appropriate sense to be grasped in the activity of the citizen is the general participation in the issues

⁶ See Barker (1946), Myres (1927), and Mindus (2014) for philological clarifications and comments about the difficulties that Book III presents.

⁷ In his translation, Jonathan Barnes (1990, p.2023) writes: “the office of juryman or member of the assembly”.

demanding by the city needed to be ruled. Accordingly, what is implied in the idea of citizenship is the activity of ruling that can be realized in different political functions. This is a definition that has been widely recognized and intended to be recovered in several contemporary political theories that claim the ideals of participatory democracy and active commitment of the citizenry to the government of their communities. However, the intrinsic political nature that can be found in the activity of participation itself without considering the institutional function in which it can be practically -and historically- displayed has been overlooked in the conceptual history of citizenship.

In Aristotle, citizenship can be defined by the activity itself that the word *arche* supports, leaving aside many abstract functionalities historically ascribed to the figure. Following Barker (1946):

The term *arche* is the general term for rule or government, as the term *archon* is the general term for a ruler, governor, or magistrate. The word originally signifies 'beginning' or 'initiative'; and we may imagine that the reason why it was extended, by an easy transference, to mean authority or rule was that the Greeks regarded those in authority as beginning, or starting, or initiating a course of *political action* (Barker 1946, p. lxvii). (Emphasis added).

It can be found here that the participation characterizing citizenship is best represented as an ignition that an action performs having political content. Therefore, participation does not necessarily have to be assumed from the perspective of the function. Acknowledging that institutions were always crucial for the Athenians (Meier 1990), it is understandable that, in practice, political action had to be estimated from the perspective of its function on behalf of the decisions made in the judicial and political offices. But, that historiographic legacy must not overlook the senses of igniting, beginning, or starting. Moreover, a distinction between the igniting moment -political action by definition- and the performing of the judicial and ruling office could not be made because citizenship was firmly recognized as the primary expression of a political identity given by the ethical linkage to the *polis*. As the historian of Greek politics Christian Meier (1990) refers, at the time, politics was not an exercise *coming*

from outside; it was *embedded*. From the distance of the times, it could be understandable that citizenship could have been read as simple participation in decisions that affected public life by means of the deliberative mechanism of judicial and ruling offices. However, following again the philological analysis of Barker (1946) and Myres (1927), interpretative difficulties of this kind are presented because our modern terms are derived from *Latin* and do not precisely correspond to the concrete definitions used by Aristotle in the Book III of *Politics*⁸. The words used by Aristotle to refer to the political world currently “are more legal and less social” (Barker 1946 p. lxvii).

In contrast, it can be stated that *arche* reflects a *principle of political action* upon which Aristotle defined *citizenship*. The political model of citizenship implies an activity in which the citizen encountered others to rule. In accordance with this interpretation the *principle of political action* is the power to guide the *polis* and, therefore, it is what stands in between *polites* and *politeia*. As well known, *politeia* is translated as “constitution”, but it had a more substantive definition than the modern word used to characterize the political order in simply formal terms. *Politeia* implied both the order established as well as the political community in which *polites* participate. Then, in a more general sense, the exercise of citizenship -*political action*- can be represented as the materialization of the very special and strong status of belonging to the *polis*.

The political activity defining the condition of citizenship in ancient Greece relied on the fact that “The polis became identical with its citizens” (Meier 1990 p. 20); it rested on the equivalence of good man and good citizen –as Aristotle himself says-; *ruling and being ruled* in equal terms was the characterization for such unique model of politics in world history. The political consequences of this were radical because the ethical bondage that supported such an identification included exclusions that, from the distance of time, many see as severe today. However, as Balibar (2017) has analyzed, regarding the condition of citizenship held in ancient Greece, the exclusions of enslaved people, women and children

⁸ For instance, the differences between the word *polis* and the related *polites*, *politikos*, *politeuma* or *politeia*, and the modern -which do not exactly denote situations taking place *in the polis* as the Greek ones- such as city, citizen, statesman, civic body, constitution. See, Barker (1946), Myres (1927) and Mindus (2014).

produced a status-based organization necessary -at the time- to sustain the autonomy of those who were considered as citizens⁹. Accordingly, the exclusions were not based on the particular behalf of those who were citizens, but it served to acquire the isonomy that participation in deliberations required to achieve their purposes.

The ethical rupture and the weakening of the praxis of politicization

Anyhow, it is important to recall that it was the ethical bondage -the embeddedness, organic, and uniformity supporting the idea of citizenship expressed in the political body of the assembly- vanished afterward and was never recovered again in history. The political model of citizenship materialized in the democracy of Athens as active participation degenerated once the support of a political identity based on an ethical life disappeared. Hegel (1991) remarkably captures the consequences of the rupture between the ancient world and modernity as a fragmentation of the political freedom that reflects in the antagonist character of the *civil society (bürgerliche Gesellschaft)* driven by the contingent relation of individual interests. And Hannah Arendt (1958) also grasps the difference by confronting the *public space* of appearance by *action* and *discourse* with the installation of the *homo faber* as the paradigm of productive modern life.

The first consequence of that rupture with the ancient world is that citizenship suffered a reconfiguration in legal and social models. In this sense, it happened that the focus on active political participation was lost, and other ideas came up to pose as a fundament for the model, such as the bondage of a national identity and a cultural or class-based identity. In a strict sense, this implied a step backward from the idea of deriving citizenship from the activity itself of sharing with others the common political good that appeared in Aristotle's citizenship. Different from this, a legal model of citizenship soon appeared in Rome following the idea of a *status civitatis* in which citizenship is more concerned with formal entitlements based on artificial principles such as the *ius soli*. Here, the contrast between the *activity* denoting *praxis* and the *status* indicating *position* in regard to a political organization

⁹ Balibar presents this idea following a note included by Rousseau in the *Discourse on the origins of inequality* referring Herodotus. Accordingly, Balibar suggest that the exclusions formed a kind of anthropological-based system of status "in service" that was necessary for the development of the autonomy of those that uphold the condition of the citizen. See, Balibar (2017 p. 129).

of the society clearly expresses what is at stake in each model. The form of materialization of citizenship in the political model is conceived in the form of direct participation *within* the political “constitution” (*politeia*); however, in the legal model, it depends on the *access* given by the *Constitutio* that organized the political order from outside. This legal bond -and not the ethical burden of membership- provided the basis for the new ideals of citizenship that appeared centuries later in Europe, in which, as Jean Bodin distinctively affirmed it, citizenship is a matter of asking to whose sovereignty one is subjected to. As Pietro Costa (1999) remarks, the model of citizenship affirmed in modernity concerns the membership to a national state, and it can only be expressed precisely in the German word *Staatsangehörigkeit*. In this fashion, citizenship will no longer be grasped as a practical activity taking place with and among others but in light of abstract provisions and entitlements given from *outside* and *above* to act accordingly. As Meier (1990) puts it:

The specific difference between the ancient world and the modern consists in the way such a sense of belonging arises. It may come from the practical experience of citizenship, of being a citizen with a voice in the city’s affairs, or it may derive from a more abstract identification with lofty Ideas and symbols. On the one hand it may be concentrated in the citizens; on the other hand, the citizens may be absorbed-taken up, taken care of, taken over-in a national identity. It may give meaning to everyday life, or it may simply be a compensation for it. It is a question of the point at which we begin to feel the need for a "meaning" -of the extent to which we have to identify ourselves either with a whole that is constituted by ourselves and our like, or with "the divine plan," the nation's destiny, or some such (p. 153).

The second consequence of the ethical rupture is not referred to as the variation in the form of the institutional framework in which citizenship can be held, but -it is argued here- with the concrete and historical political foundations of the idea of citizenship, which is the power of political action to impact the social life. Christian Meier (1990) again claims that citizenship mainly implied politicization of many areas of social life in Ancient Greece. It is asserted here that it was not only the idea of participation in the common good that deflated in history, as it has been widespread assumed, and both communitarianism and neorepublicanism have tried to recover; it was also the essential meaning of action defined

by the citizens' capacity to organize and control the social world of the political communities directly what was obscured since then. Accurately, Christian Meier (1990) calls this specific Greek experience as *politicization* (*Politisierung*):

Concomitant with the right of all the citizens of the democratic city-states of Greece to participate in public affairs were an extension of the area of political decision making to the center of government and a particular way of distinguishing between internal and external. This means that the citizens were "politicized," and this politicization defined the place of the political in Greek life: in the classical period at least, politics bore almost exclusively upon the relations between citizens qua citizens and the relations between the different city-states, and any changes that took place were in reality largely identical (and felt to be almost wholly identical) with political movements (p. 4-5).

In his interpretation of *Stasis* as a situation driven by the politicization of the *Oikos* as well as the economization of the *polis* that was part of the dynamic social life of Athens, Agamben (2015) has recently highlighted the exceptional political capacity that citizens had at the time. In his words, "[...] the stasis functions as a reactant which reveals the political element in the extreme instance as a threshold of politicization that determines for itself the political or unpolitical character of a certain being" (Agamben, 2015, p. 17). The possibility that the citizens of Athens had to produce a politicization meant that there was a fundamental distinction between *oikos* and *polis* that could be grasped and attained in actions driven by its contradictions. In this sense, the conditions of life that could be judged as political were subjected to the will of the citizens' deliberations, and politicization was the highest expression of the power of citizens, and it described a particular task of such a title. In a nutshell, citizenship was, in the most basic sense, the action with the capacity to affect the existing sociopolitical life.

Hannah Arendt's paradigmatic inquiry into the politics of the ancient world differs from the Agambenian view that unmistakably gives credit to the dynamic of politicization of the *oikos* as a distinctive phenomenon of ancient politics. Yet, the idea of political freedom that Arendt elaborates from the political action in the ancient world supports that the classical-political model of citizenship was established based on a clear understanding of the

human capacity of action (*praxis*) to go beyond the given social world, and, moreover, that with the rupture of the ethical basis such is an idea that can be grasped and reconstructed in contemporary times without submitting to models of citizenship that dispense with the political meaning of the idea. In Arendt's view, political freedom depends on performing beyond the social institutions that can be ahistorically related to the ancient sphere of the *oikos* to encounter a new world in which action flourishes in concert with others. Therefore, the *political action* implied in the idea of citizenship presented here belongs to a practical realm that emphasizes the power of human action to influence the social world (Cannovan 1992; Passerin D'Entreves 1994).

From the ancient world to modern times

All in all, the rupture with the ethical grounding of the political community not only caused a variation in the way political activity was formulated, but it produced the diminishing of the power of direct political action attributed to the members of any political community. This produced a displacement of what citizenship is in its *particularity*. In left-Hegelian words, citizenship became non-identical to itself in a way that could not be longer recovered. Therefore, citizenship shall be portrayed in different abstract universalities in modern and contemporary political ideas, whereas the capacity of action to politicize the social world shall be repressed to express the individual interest in the capitalist society. Such shall be expressed in the upcoming political theories of *liberalism*, *communitarianism*, *neorepublicanism*, and *postmodernism*. These theories did not recover the fundamental idea of political action for citizenship, and their insights into the political subjects kept the concept depoliticized.

After Aristotle, citizenship became a normative discourse asserted by the necessity of virtuous citizens to sustain a well-ordered society. The influence of Cicero's political doctrine in the transition towards the *Roman Principate* displaced the emphasis given to direct political action in the Aristotelian theory of citizenship and relocated the question to a reflection on the appropriate institutions. For Cicero, the main concern was the achievement of *De optima re publica* measured by the institutional equilibrium that a mixed constitution can provide. Consequently, *De optimo cive* appears as the greatest product of the institutions,

thereby, as its consequence, not as its cause¹⁰. Although it may appear that Roman citizenship was similar to Greek citizenship with regard to the political qualifications of who deserved to have the title of a citizen, as time went by, the dislocation of the political subject and the private subject began to emerge and play against the political activity as a decoupled-contradictory character.

As Rome expanded – initially within Italy, then over the rest of Europe, and finally into Africa and Asia – two important innovations came about. First, the populations of conquered territories were given a version of Roman citizenship while being allowed to retain their own forms of government, including whatever citizenship status they offered. Second, the version of Roman citizenship given was of a legal rather than a political kind – ‘*civitas sine suffragio*’, or ‘citizenship without the vote’. So, the Empire allowed dual citizenship, though it reduced Roman citizenship to a legal status. As a result, the legal and political communities pulled apart. The scope of law went beyond political borders and did not need to be co-extensive with a given territorial unit (Bellamy, 2008, p. 39).

Accordingly, throughout the reception of Aristotle’s *Politics* in the work of Thomas, in the modern discourse of politics, neither virtue will contain the implications given by the bondage of ethics and politics that provided a clear and natural meaning to political action, nor the political community will be defined from the distinction between *oikos* and *polis* that offered the context for the action to be realized by means of politicization. As Habermas remarkably notes:

The order of the *polis* was actualized in the participation of the citizens in administration, legislation, justice and consultation: the *ordo* retained by Thomas sacrifices the political substance of the citizen’s politically oriented will and consciousness as formed in public discussion. [...] The opposition of *polis* and *oikos* has been reduce to the common denominator of *societas* (1988 p. 48).

Following Habermas, Aristotle’s *Politics* will be read as a philosophy of social order since Thomas in two possible ways: on the one hand, in an interpretation seeking to recover the interconnectedness of Ethics and Politics and, on the other hand, in a theory pursuing the

¹⁰ See, Bellamy (2008); Rubio Carracedo (2007).

establishing of an organized society suitable to the image the individual character of human existence. In this sense, modern theories of citizenship follow those two lines commonly represented as the two classic and standards of Greek citizenship and Roman citizenship (Pocock, 1995; Bellamy, 1994; Zolo, 2007; Dwyer, 2010). G.A. Pocock (1995) says that the basic distinction between them is that the first has a political character and the second is eminently juridical; that is to say again, one favors the active participation and the other a *given status*. Accordingly, centuries later, each model was advocated by the two main modern political theories of *republicanism* represented by authors such as Marsilius, Machiavelli and Rousseau, and *liberalism* embodied by Hobbes and Locke¹¹. These general theories offered different solutions to the problem of citizenship by assuming the rupture affirmed by Thomas and taking distance from the well-known ontotheological doctrine of natural law impudged by him¹². But, in any case, that meant reconsidering the political action with its power of politicization itself. The history of how it was overlooked in the manifold of normative criteria regarding the nature of human action -seen as freedom in modernity- and the political order will prove the point of an existing depoliticized history of citizenship.

II. The categories of political membership. On the modern political philosophy of the idea of citizenship.

Republican citizenship

Political action disappears for an extended period of time in the rise and dominance of the Christian-world view in Europe. As a central part of the city's function, the citizen was displaced by the true believer and his concern about being in grace with god (Pocock, 1975). “The Christian world-view transformed the rationale of political action from that of the *polis*

¹¹ Secondary models have appeared to actualize and correct -respectively- the modern models. The *neorepublican* of Hannah Arendt, Quentin Skinner and Phillip Pettit, and the *communitarist* perspectives of Michael Sandel, Michael Walzer and David Miller developed as a response to the contemporary reformulation of the liberal discourse of John Rawls. The goal in the next section is to provide a historical reconstruction of the modern political theories. The contemporary ones along with the postmodern theories of political action are analyzed in chapter II.

¹² About this relation, see Bloch (2008), Habermas (1988) and Horkheimer (1993).

to a theological framework” (Held, 2006 p. 29). However, since the last decades of the eleventh century, communities in northern Italy began to claim and settle down their institutions against the papal authority (Skinner, 1992), and political action reappeared as a historical necessity in a context of revolt against the established power of the feudal authorities. Despite following David Held, this first postclassical expression of self-government became more of an inspiration than a real example of a new political dynamic. Self-government was often confronted with the charges of being very fragile, unbalanced, and instable and, in practice, it was going to contribute to the development of new political realities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Republicanism is basically based on the idea of political freedom safeguarded in the existence of participatory negotiations and institutional arrangements processes. The theory is based on the assertion of -first- a regime of civic virtue attributed to political subjects aiming to provide an ideal in which freedom can be stably displayed and -second-, a mixed constitution for the balance of the governmental authorities. In practical terms, the authorities must serve as regulatory stances for the realization of freedom -read as virtue- displayed by means of participatory processes. Accordingly,

[...] freedom meant freedom from the arbitrary power of tyrants, together with the right of citizens to run their common affairs by participating in government. “Virtue” meant patriotism and public spirit, a heroic willingness to set the common good above one’s own or one’s own family interests (Canovan 1987 p. 434.).

Republicanism is not a general paradigm of political theory without internal discrepancies. Even in its early formulations, significant disagreements can be found in the three main figures: Marsilius, Machiavelli, and Rousseau. Their differences rest on how they conceived the relationship between freedom, virtue, and political participation with the institutions of government. Each of them emphasizes one of the elements in front of the authorities and law, and their different efforts to place one of them as more important than the other reveal how political action is alienated in the republican theory of citizenship.

Marsilius

The first and most consistent version of republicanism is expressed in the work of Marsilius. For him, a community is the place where “sufficient life” takes place, accomplishing the natural human will. Hence, government is only the means to achieve this common good. A well-order community relies upon participation as the highest expression of a well-functioning community:

[...] the people or the whole body of citizens, or the weightier part thereof, through its election or will expressed by words in the general assembly of the citizens, commanding or determining that something can be done or omitted with regard to human civil acts [...] (Marsilius 1980 p. 45).

The function of law is appropriately to deliver the will of authentic political authority of the people and secure it. But, getting involved in the process of making law proves the realization for freedom and guarantees. Moreover, it is only in this process that virtue develops in those who are involved in the definition of the common benefit by law:

[...] the common utility of a law is better noted by the entire multitude, because no one knowingly harms himself. Anyone can look to see whether a proposed law leans toward the benefit of one or a few persons more than of the other or the community, and can protest against it (p.47).

Marsilius is the first to claim for a participatory government and popular sovereignty, and, in his case, citizenship means both getting involved in the realization of the good for the political community and the direct determination of law conducted to the common benefit. This conception of citizenship presumes a natural inclination of humans to pursue a good life and government plays as means for this realization. But, it is more important in this conception that such presupposition can only be achieved by the direct determination of law and the believe that the process of participation needed for the correct use of law also produces the virtue of the common benefit. Therefore, citizenship is again assimilated to participation, but it also has the newly added feature of a given common good that provides the normative criteria for setting the political world in accordance with it.

Machiavelli

The defense of a well-ordered society by means of contributing to the government and the development of the desirable natural goodness stated by Marsilius contrasts with the instability of the Italian republics that Machiavelli assumes. In accordance with the historical situation of the time that reduces the feasibility of Marsilius theory, the second republican paradigm of citizenship to be found in Machiavelli assures a pessimistic anthropology of humankind and a natural tendency of the government to change from good to bad forms. As such, the perspectives for political participation change for the republican paradigm with Machiavelli. The enmity and fear of men play as an invariable principle, and it is only by means of the variable nature of the forms of government that a virtuous life for the community can be attained.

Thus, Machiavelli asserts a pessimism about human nature and the presupposition that the adequate use of freedom can correct it. Politics is then what creates the possibility of such a right exercising. Acknowledging this feature, Horkheimer (1993) finds in Machiavelli the beginnings of the common anthropological conception of humankind to be found in the philosophy of the modern bourgeoisie, in which freedom receives an abstract psychological representation that can be molded from outside attending to certain normative -rationalistic- criteria.

Mainly, freedom and civic virtue will not be seen anymore as the direct basis of and organized political community for Machiavelli. Likewise, political participation will not have an intrinsic value to attain this goal. In contrast, it is a governmental system that can ensure that the citizenry chooses the common good over their own interest. Machiavelli understands virtue as “a willingness to do whatever may be necessary for the pursuit of civic glory” (1983). The government is not seen as the guarantor of the social order by itself, but it provides a mediated participation and modeling of freedom capable of bringing prosperity to the community. However, the latter cannot be realized without the former, which, in realistic terms, makes such mediation the most important part. Concerning this, Machiavelli assumes that freedom is implicated in the existing interests that oppose and dissent from each other; furthermore, it is what creates the possibility to create the good and appropriate order

(Skinner, 1981). This is why willingness to participate is not what enables a steady community but a mixed constitution that stabilizes the conflicts caused by the interest of citizens.

Accordingly, citizenship was first and foremost the actions taken via the mechanisms provided by the mixed constitution -such as elections of consuls and representatives-. Competing interests forecasted outside the institutional sphere were to be regulated by the famously prescribed *raison d'État* in order to preserve the community against the instability produced by the defense of those interests: “The sole aim of the Prince must be to secure his life and his power. All means which he employs towards this end will be justified” (Machiavelli 1983). In this sense, politics becomes an art -technic (*tecné*)- concerning the ways in which the preservation of power and order can be achieved.

Moreover, any form of ethical foundation for political action is completely eliminated. In exchange, human beings are presupposed as “[...] ungrateful, fickle, hypocritical, cowardly and selfish” (Machiavelli 1983), and the political action is attributed to them as far as it appears as an interest, first, reified in an idea of virtue produced by the law enforcement and religion, and second, negotiated through the mixed constitution mechanisms. Therefore, political action did not have a positive value as a praxis of the community members for Machiavelli; indeed, it was the confrontational consequence of politicization that he wanted to prevent by means of conceiving politics as an art of manipulating the political realm of disputations.

Conversely, in the most radical model of republicanism, Rousseau reinstated the importance of political participation of the citizenry as a condition for freedom and the existing of a self-governing political community. Rousseau championed the direct participation of citizens in the public affairs regulated by the law and in the formation of the society. Therefore, Rousseau provided the most accurate argument to recover the essential idea of political action underlying citizenship. In his case, as Machiavelli assumes, citizenship is attached neither to a communal idea of goodness -as Marsilius argues- nor to a pessimistic idea of human nature that can be molded. In contrast, Rousseau speaks about the individual and benevolent nature as a point of departure for what fortune can become in the

social and political world. Despite this, as Dieter Thomä (2019) has recently proved it, Rousseau's opponent is not Machiavelli, but Hobbes, which implies that Rousseau conceives the relation between the social order and the individual as a republican despite the moral value he ascribes to the latter.

Rousseau

Rousseau's political participation expresses the means by which the individual can be preserved after the corruption of the state of nature in which the kindness of the human being appears to be naturally realized. Based on this, Rousseau's political theory can be read as a project that intends to convert the good human into a political citizen, acknowledging the obstacles imposed by the progress of civilization. The radicality of Rousseau comes precisely from the statement that it is only through participation in legislation mediated by the attainment of a general will that the individual natural kindness can be retained. Accordingly, Rousseau's question is, "how to find a form of association which will defend the person and goods of each member with the collective force of all, and under which each individual, while uniting himself with the others [...] remains as free as before" (1968 p. 60).

Participation towards the acquisition of the general will is precisely wherein the normative-radical model of citizenship takes place and what also differentiates Rousseau from any liberal theory despite his consideration of the moral value of the individual. The "general will" cannot be the product of a negotiation of the individual's private interests; in contrast with the "will of all," the "general will" guarantees the achievement of the common good made out of a naturally positive common sense and reinforced with the process of generation of the political will. The condition to attain a democratic community of this kind is that every person considers herself as the ruled and the ruler. The opportunity of the radical concept of citizenship that Rousseau first presents in modernity lies here at the level of self-determination, but others are needed to achieve it and secure it in practical terms. For Rousseau, the only feature inherited from the state of nature has been the capacity to perform politically; thereby, he makes coincide the self-determination of all the participants by a situation in which all have the "same rights" of freedom and property to guarantee self-determination.

Those rights are both the conditions to live free of economic and social dependence, which simultaneously ensures each person's free participation. Accordingly, the radical model of political participation cannot stand by itself as it is able to sustain all the same stable results for a democratic community by itself. In order to provide a well-organized society where freedom can take place, Rousseau has to emphasize the condition of being ruled. Acknowledging that humankind could be possessed by an interest in the exchange of duties, Rousseau enforces a form of institutional order. To prevent the unbalances between the conditions of the ruled and the ruler, the legislator is asserted as an appropriate censor “[...] which can compel without violence and persuade without convincing” (Rousseau 1968). The legislator is conceived as an adviser for the established political community; therefore, neither the sovereign nor the will of the people can be alienated in this figure. However, the role it must have in the constituted community to prevent the disorder, along with the understanding that a democratic-radical community can only be achieved in a small state, reduces the practical radicality of Rousseau’s democratic theory and turns it into an unrealizable model for complex and capitalized societies.

Moreover, Rousseau’s political theory is limited in another sense concerning a radical concept of citizenship. His idea of participation assumes a political body that is more or less closed in accordance with the rational conditions he attributes to the political communities: The members of the political community must enjoy the status of having the same rights in order to join the process of configuration of the general will. The condition of non-dependency is something to be provided by the political community and cannot be a reason for political action. Therefore, this model of republican citizenship is limited from the perspective of contemporary times because -as Rancière (2004) would put it- “those that have no part” in the political community are deprived of participation. In this sense, also following Carole Pateman’s critique (1988), women, proletarians, and non-recognized ethnic or cultural communities cannot be considered in this model of citizenship.

Lastly, there is another way of thinking about political action in a radical sense that stems from the idealization of freedom underlying Rousseau’s theory. His moral anthropology should not be overlooked here because it is what provides the *telos* of political

action by stating vis-à-vis limiting political action to the realization of a prescribed human nature. As a consequence, as previously mentioned, the destructive negativity or corruption produced by the institutions and relations of the social world cannot be *the reason for* political praxis. Therefore, an emancipatory politicization of a situation that is not subjected to the power of the affected because the material social order imposes it cannot find expression even in the most radical theory of republican citizenship.

Liberal citizenship

Political action arrives to its most alienated form in the bourgeois conception of the liberal society. The early-classical liberal doctrine mainly aimed to secure a private sphere for human action in which the abstractions of the economic-free rationality, political representation and the individual private interest of the owner displace autonomy, political participation, and the capacity of subjects to politicize. The nature and basis of politics do not come from the political action of members of society but, in contrast, from its negation. Citizens are defined mainly by their obligations and not by their self-determination. Therefore, consent, assent, agreement, and limited elections are the common jargon of liberal democratic theory and their ideal types for citizens' actions. Accordingly, politics itself possesses a very different nature than the one concerning the idea of participatory citizenship. For the liberal philosophy, politics is concerned with the theory of the State and the external obligations established by the abstract law. The rationalistic doctrine of natural law provided sufficient ambivalence to support the arguments of the entire modern discourse of politics. However, its use in favor of the bourgeoisie interest-based historical movement against the *Ancient regime* and its powers (the tyrannical monarchy and religion) created a theoretical fundament to portray new abstract formulations needed to justify the practical function of the modern and capitalist society.

Hobbes

Hobbes represented the most important figure for the depoliticized liberal theory of citizenship with his conception of human nature and sovereign power. Like Machiavelli, Hobbes assumed that men are evil and corrupted by nature to offer a complex theory about

domination through the means of a State that absolutely monopolizes power. The complexity of his conception is precisely that he portrays the process of constructing such an entity from the given nature of individuals to their rational and voluntary incorporation into the absolute sovereign State. This is possible due to a pessimistic view of the human nature presented before and after socialization (Strauss 1953). Therefore, the doctrine of the rational natural law, by which the entire modern political theory projects the creation of the social state, is adopted under an extreme naturalistic approach to human nature that provides a mechanistic logic for the process of settling the power of the State down (Horkheimer 1993).

Accordingly, all men are evil by nature and live in a state of enmity caused by the unrestricted freedom that forces them to pursue conservation by the most aggressive means. Both an unlimited appetite and an unlimited fear move the individuals in the state of nature: the war of all against all prevails there (*bellum omnium in omnes*)¹³. Thus, it must be rational and natural that every man sees the necessity of security, and, for that reason, they can give up their rights and power and surrender them to a powerful authority with the capacity to keep security and peace on their behalf:

[...] as men, for the attaining of peace and conservation of themselves thereby, have made an artificial man, which we call a Commonwealth; so also have they made artificial chains, called civil laws, which they themselves, by mutual covenants, have fastened at one end to the lips of that man, or assembly, to whom they have given the sovereign power, and at the other to their own ears (Hobbes 1968 p. 130)

The act of giving power to the State by settling the social pact is the only moment that could be seen as politically relevant from the perspective of the subject's action. However, and in any case, Hobbes had already curtailed the content of their actions by ascribing to them a limited capacity for instrumental action and economic rationality. The result of the social pact is an indivisible, absolute, and eternal sovereign representing their interest in

¹³ “[...] if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their end (which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only) endeavour to destroy or subdue one another. And from hence it comes to pass that where an invader hath no more to fear than another man's single power, if one plant, sow, build, or possess a convenient seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united to dispossess and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labour, but also of his life or liberty” (Hobbes 1968).

having security and peace under the obligation and duty to obey the sovereign's power. This expresses Hobbes' aversion to democratic citizenship but also shows why he is yet a liberal in regard to the situations of the individuals after the state of nature: "A Multitude of men, are made *One* person when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented; so that it be done with the consent of every one of that Multitude in particular" (Hobbes 1968 p. 220). The absolutism of the State only pays attention to the objective of maintaining security and peace, which is, at the same time, the interest of the people. It is how the ambivalence between a non-democratic domination and a liberal representation should be understood in Hobbes's political theory. It also explains why the Hobbesian theory is not the most characteristic theory of the liberal bourgeoisie. Liberal theory only provided a stable justification for the interests of the historical movement of the bourgeoisie once the interests ascribed to the abstract idea of the individual were secured against any form of intervention. Accordingly, liberal theory was utterly representative of that interest once the separation of the State and civil society was instated and the self-understanding of the private individual was endorsed in coercive rules.

Locke

That was realized in Locke's liberal conception of politics by affirming a positive human nature and the defense of corresponding natural rights. This basis aimed to reject the unbalance attributed to the liberal conception of government defended by Hobbes, consisting of the absolute power that sovereign subjects have to surrender to have security and peace. In Locke's state of nature, individuals live in a "*State of perfect Freedom* to order their Actions, dispose of their Possessions and Persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the Law of Nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other Man" (Locke 1963 §4). In contrast to Hobbes, natural reason guides the appreciation that all men are free and equal and capable of respecting the rights of others by recognizing their legitimate gained property acquired by means of work and the laws of nature given by God. Accordingly, the State must be an instrument for the defense of life, freedom, and property. Its existence is justified because the "inconveniencies" resulting from the lack of authority in the state of nature might force individuals to get involved in conflicts. Although, for Locke, such neither

implies that individuals live in war nor that they must surrender their rights to the political authority. Instead, the “inconveniences” in the state of nature compel the “equally free men” to create -by agreement and separately- a civil society and a government in which the natural rights of citizens can be preserved. Hence, In Locke’s political construction, political power remains in the people, and the legitimacy of the public authority is based upon consent; it must be attached to a form of constitutional government in which power is legally programmed and divided.

Furthermore, the fundamental legal rights derived from the idea of natural rights in possession of all individuals are the most important element in Locke’s theoretical construction because they inform the way that political action is abstracted in the liberal tradition. The fundamental rights guaranteeing the individual’s private autonomy delineate a sphere of civil society in which any interference of political power is proscribed. In contrast to the economic activity in which such private autonomy is realized, political activity becomes a secondary task for the individuals first and foremost concerned with the commodity exchange. So, citizenship is estimated as a passive activity that denotes membership to a nation and few political obligations imposed by legal forms. Political relations are displaced and mediated by a political administration. The latter must not be directly controlled by the former; the representatives of the national interest must develop the legal techniques for that task. Not even Locke’s civil disobedience makes an argument in favor of political action. It is only justified under the conditions in which tyrannical acts offend the natural rights in possession of the people. Hence, the restoration of the liberal society aims to ensure the social contract agreed upon the principles of the natural right to property and the individual’s interest. No society can be created beyond this, and no political action can go against the bourgeois social order. Civil disobedience will always imply the restoration of a bourgeois order naturally assumed in which political action has been deprived of any power to go beyond its functionalization to the economic private sphere.

The political theories of Hobbes and Locke are the two essential sources for the conception of the prevailing idea of citizenship since modernity: a relation between the individuals -seen as private subjects guided by their economic interest- and a political

authority that acts in accordance with that interest of a generalized civil society. Accordingly, the main political action of the idea of citizenship that was inherited from the ancient world was progressively displaced by the alienated political character of the subjects up to becoming absorbed by the economic nature of modern society. Even in the most progressist theories of liberalism, such as Mill, the idea of the representative government was never surpassed. As Benjamin Constant attested, the ideal of direct participation was condemned as impossible to be realized in modern politics.

Towards a Critique of the political philosophy of Citizenship

The abstract conception of citizenship underlying the modern discourse of politics is mainly defined by the act of positivization of natural law and the enacting of fundamental rights. Both liberalism and republicanism include the moment of positivization as a logical necessity for the political functioning of modern society¹⁴. The legitimization of institutions for domination and the affirmation of a liberated social sphere in which individuals can pursue their personal interests were stabilized by the legal declaration of the fundamental rights of the individuals. In this sense,

[...] the fundamental rights correspond to the laws of intercourse developed prior to the state; the substance of this intercourse originates in a state of nature or in a society rooted in nature and is preserved intact within the framework of the political order. Indeed, the political order has the exclusive purpose of preserving these laws. Under these circumstances it is sufficient to charge the government, in a manner that can be revoked, with the commission of sanctioning the natural rights (Habermas 1988 p. 104).

That made possible a new social order first envisioned in the philosophical constructions of *iusnaturalism* but only achieved by the Revolution in France. The positivization of natural law untied the connection between the ancient consideration of citizenship as a necessary active political participation -interpreted in the doctrine of natural

¹⁴ Neither Rousseau can be completely exonerated from the abstract notion of citizenship asserted in modernity. As argued, to become a citizen of the state he considers certain limitations and impositions in order to preserve of the political order.

law as civic virtue- and the functioning of society as a whole. Only after this process was the sphere of society that represented the interest of the bourgeoisie liberated to establish the sociopolitical conditions of a new epoch. As Habermas (1988) remarks:

While in classical Natural Law the norms of moral and just action are equally oriented in their content toward the good -and that means virtuous- life of citizens, the formal law of the modern age is divested of the catalogues of duties in the material order life, whether of a city or of a social class. Instead, it allows a neutral sphere of personal choice, in which every citizen, as private person can egoistically follow goals of maximizing his own needs. Formal rights are in principle rights of freedom, because they must set free all act which are not explicitly prohibited according to externally specified criteria (p. 84).

No one understood this historical situation better than Hegel in his *Natural Law Essay* and *Philosophy of Law*. The French Revolution realized the reason contained in the philosophical constructions of the modern theory of social contract but also included its negation, declaring a social order that did not surpass the subjective impulse of the revolutionaries. In this direction, Hegel is first –before Marx- at evidencing the historical conditions in which political action must be diagnosed in modern times by formulating the concept of *civil society* as the other dialectical counterpart of the abstract law. The reality of civil society includes freedom in the abstract form of the juridical consideration of all men and the figures of the juridical person and the legal obligation to contract and act in accordance with the particular interest. However, it also shows a disconnection between the particular subjects, making the political realization of an ethical life difficult to grasp from their perspective¹⁵. As Marx explained, this situation implies a fragmentation of the *homme*

¹⁵ Seyla Benhabib (1986) remarkably asserts: “Hegel's methodological argument against "state of nature" theories can be put as follows: if a theory begins by resorting to a counterfactual abstraction, then the theorist must possess criteria in light of which certain aspects of the human condition are ignored while others are included in the initial abstraction. But any such criteria will themselves be normative, for they will depend on what the theorist considers essential or inessential aspects of human nature. When one examines the normative criteria operative in these early natural right theories, one sees that each a priori is in fact an a posteriori, or how humans are in modern bourgeois society is the guiding criterion in determining what they ought to be or might have been like in the state of nature. The initial counterfactual abstraction from which the theorist proceeds does not justify, but merely illustrates, the concept of human nature and reason that he subscribes to. Hegel's main concern in this essay is to show that the abstractions to which these theorists resort destroy any genuine conception of ethical life. In modern natural right theories, human nature is viewed as a given from which the theorist must proceed and which he cannot aspire to transform” (27).

and the *citoyenne* supported by such reality of the bourgeois civil society that distinctively defines the abstract logic of the modern political discourse of citizenship.

Marx sentenced the process of abstraction of citizenship at the basis of the rational constructions of politics in modernity and dismantled it, arriving at the bottom of the reality that represented the economic relations of the market society. But while this critique was accurately exposed, the modern State's coercive means were strengthened, and all the ideological means for its justification were fixed as well. The abstraction of citizenship by means of its legal formalization played an important role in modern society's functioning, and it remains today in the juridical and sociological models of citizenship. By overcoming Marx's critique in practice, the liberal society could elevate and evolve during the twentieth century, deepening the disconnect between the material base of the political realm and the abstractions that organize the social world on behalf of the economic system. In this process, the integration of society was decoupled from the direct claims of the citizens, and the need for legitimation began to depend more on the functions of law and administrative techniques. While the legal system also detached itself from any *iusnaturalistic* justification in this process of political modernization impelled by the political theory of the bourgeoisie, the idea of citizenship was assimilated to a self-reference system of rights dominating its comprehension during the twentieth century¹⁶.

The positivization of the natural law created an understanding of the political realm that does not immediately correspond with the political action of the subjects involved. This was achieved by the mediation of institutions that secure the abstract image of the private individual and economic rationality. As a product, citizenship describes a prefigured relation between the individuals as private subjects with an economic interest and those political institutions. Accordingly, this relation can be explained in two directions: from the State to the civil society, citizenship regulates the membership in a community wherein the security to develop particular interests is provided by legal and administrative means. As Horkheimer (1993) puts it in his texts about the origins of the bourgeois philosophy of history, the

¹⁶ See, Habermas (1992).

historical interest of the bourgeoisie would not have developed without the support of the political institutions imagined from the doctrine of natural law that supported the bourgeoisie's rights. In the other direction, from the civil society to the state, citizenship held the stock of the defensive mechanisms that the bourgeoisie had to secure their economic private interest from any intervention. Thus, from this perspective, the political institutions such as the representative government and the political rights of participation defended in the progressist's theories of "developmental liberalism" -as Macpherson (2011) names Mill's liberalism- also reveal their depoliticizing character.

III. The bases of the critical tradition of subjective freedom. On the social philosophy of modern citizenship.

Kant and the active citizenship.

Kant is neither subjected to the doctrine of natural law that attached the analysis of politics to the canons of a specialized moral philosophy intending to judge the just order by an *a priori* criteria of a given substance of "nature" nor a standardized canon of "reason". The confines of practical philosophy imposed by the unsurmountable attention to the process of disseminating ethics into *the social* are surpassed in his practical philosophy by examining the problems of freedom from the perspective of the subject itself. Accordingly, the spheres of politics, law, and morality are separated to give the stance of subjective reason the decisive moment in the discussion of the nature of freedom. In fact, the individual's capacity to determine herself under the rules of a just order in tension with the compulsions linked to its empirical existence becomes the real problem for practical philosophy. Neither an external power, an imposed authority, nor an empirical content of reason can determine the transcendental capacity of reason in its pure form. Freedom is only attached to assert "[...] the right of men [to live] under public coercive law, through which each one can receive his due and can be made secure from the interference of others" (Kant, *On the Common Saying: That May Be True in Theory; but is of No Practical Use*, 1983 p. 71). Therefore, the previous iusnaturalistic theories are surpassed as far as the social contract is a juridical condition in a strict sense, a kind of societal model governed by juridical relations. For Kant, an "innate"

right to equal liberties initially contented in the autonomy of all individuals as moral subjects defines the judgment and validity of a society in which that right is performed in the sense that “[...] right is the limitation of each person’s freedom so that it is compatible with the freedom of everyone, insofar as this is possible in accord with the general law” (Kant, *On the Common Saying...*, p. 72).

In another place, Kant also mentions this idea of a society defined by juridical relations as

[...] a constitution in harmony with the natural right of man, one namely in which the citizens obedient to the law, besides being united, ought also to be legislative, lies at the basis of all political forms; and the body politic which conceived in conformity to it by virtue of pure concepts of reason, signifies a Platonic Ideal (*res publica noumenon*) is not an empty chimera, but rather the eternal norm for all civil organization in general, and averts all war (Kant, *The Conflict of Faculties* [1797], p. 163).

The principle of law standing over the innate right to equal liberties and the autonomy of subjects as morals implicate, in normative terms, the civil constitution of states as republics governed by law and the pacifist relations among the states guaranteed by a cosmopolitan global federation (Kant, *Perpetual Peace*). The relation of the morality of politics implicated in that criterion was held by the order of the laws of freedom revealed by the practical exercise of the transcendental reason, but in order to be secured within the historical context of the modern-bourgeois society, in the political texts of Kant, it also requires the fulfillment of *enlightenment* represented in the use of reason publicly. Enlightenment means to think for oneself and get free of *tutelage* using reason. This use should be public since freedom is not the practice of one’s single private effort; it is something that occurs in the encounter of other's humanity and by the courage of one’s will¹⁷. From this followed a remarkable indication of the impulse of politicization:

¹⁷ "Certainly one may say. 'Freedom to speak or write can be taken from us by a superior power, but never the freedom to think!' But how much, and how correctly, would we think if we did not think as it were in common with others, with whom we mutually communicate!" (Kant, *What is Orientation in Thinking?*, [1949] p. 293.

The public use of one's reason must always be free [one can say carrying with it], and *it alone can bring about enlightenment among men*. The private use of reason, on the other hand, may often be very narrowly restricted without particularly hindering the progress of enlightenment (Kant, *What is Enlightenment?* p. 5). (emphasis added).

Kant is a theorist of bourgeois society; his political writings are an exemplary indication of the struggle for securing the sphere of private interest in front of the traditional political power and support their exclusive egoistic benefit, nevertheless, as it can result from an attentive reading to that passage, his idealized subjective maxim of the use of reason publicly includes a strong claim for the realization of freedom -as political autonomy- by, so to say, speaking loud and the disclosure of an anew state of things that can be brought about *by* it.

Following Habermas (1991), Kant is there speaking “[...] of knowledge of the world (*Weltkenntnis*); he referred to the man of the world (*Mann von Welt*) [...] "world" here pointed to humanity as species” (106). Public reason is directed to the “world” of free cosmopolitan citizens who interact as rational beings, encouraging the progress of enlightenment. Thus, as Habermas insists: “The public of "human beings" engaged in the rational-critical debate was constituted into one of "citizens" wherever there was communication concerning the affairs of the "commonwealth"” (1991, p. 106-107). An indication of this underlying idea of citizenship can be found in the concept of public law in contradistinction to any form of private ruling; the former is seen as a product of a “public agreement” of a public critical debate (Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 281)¹⁸. Following Habermas (1991) entirely again in this point, political actions carried out in the public use of reason realizing one’s own right to freedom and at the same time of the others in accordance with the moral law brings about a new moral politics that aspires to reach a “perfectly just order.”

Although it is by no means a state of things that cannot be compelled by political actions oriented towards such a goal, indeed, that is not even an inclusive historical reality for all the people that can be decided or encountered once and for all. Kant relies on a

¹⁸ Also see, Habermas (1991, pp. 102-117; and 1996, pp. 92-104).

philosophy of progress to ensure that the path toward a just order (a civil constitution and a perfect peace) can only be understood as a legal matter. That allows him to legitimize -in a way- the existence of non-political private autonomy¹⁹.

Given a multitude of rational beings requiring universal laws for their preservation, but each of whom is secretly inclined to exempt himself from them, to establish a constitution in such a way that, although their private intentions conflict, they check each other, with the result that their public conduct is the same as if they had no such intentions (Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, p. 112).

Moreover, Kant was reconciled with the reality of an independent sphere of social relations from which his idea of politics, as an expression of an autonomous use of public reason of the moral subject, could be endangered by the material conditions undermining the normative position of citizenship in the modern-liberal society of commodity exchange.

The only qualification required by a citizen (apart, of course, from being an adult male) is that he must be his own master (*sui iuris*), and must have some *property* [...] if he does not reach the same level as others, the fault lies either with himself (i.e., lack of ability or serious endeavour) or with circumstances for which he cannot blame others, and not with the irresistible will of any outside party (Kant, *On the Common Saying...*, p. __).

As Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge (1993) said in their *Public Sphere and Experience* “Kant excludes from politics and the public sphere all those sections of the population that do not participate in bourgeois politics because they cannot afford it” (1993 p. 10). Correspondingly, there is already in Kant a first contradiction conditioning the concept of modern universal citizenship -and the operation of its inherent politicizing or depoliticizing logic- by means of the paradoxical divergence between its practical philosophy

¹⁹ “Kant resolved this dilemma through a philosophy of history according to which, even without the active efforts of inwardly free individuals, outwardly free conditions would come about under which politics could be permanently merged in morality. Kant's construction of a progress of the human race and its social condition is familiar. This progress was postulated to result from nothing but the constraints of nature, without having to take into account the efforts that the laws of freedom obligated men to undertake themselves” (Habermas, 1991 p. 109).

and the historical, social relations. Habermas expresses that the first moment of contradiction of citizenship within the scope of Kant's political philosophy in exact words is as follows:

The fiction of a justice immanent in free commerce was what rendered plausible the conflation of *bourgeois* and *homme*, of self-interested, property-owning private people and autonomous individuals per se. The specific relationship between private and public sphere, from which arose the duplication of the selfish bourgeois in the guise of the unselfish homme, of the empirical subject in that of the intelligible one, was what made it possible to consider the *citoyen*, the citizen eligible to vote, under the twofold aspect of legality and morality. In his "pathologically enforced" conduct he could at the same time appear as a morally free person as long as the concordance of the political public sphere with its self-interpretation (derived from the literary public sphere) was ensured by the intent of nature, that is to say, on the basis of a society of freely competing property-owning private people emancipated from domination and insulated from intrusions of power. This had to occur in such a way that these interested private people assembled to constitute a public, in their capacity as citizens, behaved outwardly as if they were inwardly free persons (1991 p. 111).

Still, the idealization of citizenship in the public use of reason and the materialization of the mediation of the universal right to equal liberties by means of it represented an anchor point for an impulse of politicization from the autonomy of free individuals initiated in modernity. However, as a real possibility corresponding with the social establishment of its ambiguities, such an impulse could not have been foreseen until the modern society was not understood in its internal structure and historical function as a civil society that confronts its idealizations based on the socio-temporal groundings.

Hegel and the citizen as a patriotic of the constitution

Hegel offers the proper conditions to judge the contradictory character of modern citizenship for political philosophy by incorporating the sphere of social relations that Kant had left aside from his transcendental philosophy. Attentive to the findings of the English theoretical work concerning the moral and political economy, Hegel positioned the sphere of the social as central to understanding the function of modern life. Moreover, he deepened the Kantian universalization of the principle of subjectivity by enhancing the discussion in the

practical philosophy of morality and autonomy with the consideration of the problem of will and self-determination within the institutional complexes of modernity and the ethical bondage to the social community; and, like no other author in the history of political philosophy, Hegel elevated the complexities underlying the distinction between the State and society inaugurated by the movement of enlightenment.

The two tendencies of modern politics, the doctrine of the natural law of liberalism and the Kantian construction built from a moral point of view converge in Hegel's compendium of practical philosophy: *The Philosophy of Right*²⁰. For Hegel, those two models of the freedom of the will are incomplete and one-sided in a similar proportion. The former describes will (self-determination) as negative freedom corresponding to the capacity to act intentionally beyond the passions and necessities, that is, taking a voluntary decision detaching from the nature that compels (Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* § 5). The limitation of this *negative freedom* or *freedom of the understanding* -as Hegel names it- is that it impedes the subject's actions by predetermining certain abstractly given and restricted ends. The latter is seen as an improvement of the former up to some degree since, in such a model, freedom is attributed to the rational decision of an individual capable of setting her own ends²¹; Hegel sees such improvement pondering the practical problem of choosing which inclinations are preferable to act accordingly, following what defines the Kantian idea of moral freedom. Despite having some content, Hegel points out that this idea of freedom is also one-sided because the decision to act freely remains contingently subjected to the impulses; that is to say, the content of the decision is not made out of one's will, it does so only in formal terms²². In both cases, free will is not adequately related to the natural impulses and given necessities

²⁰ Axel Honneth (2010) has insisted that all the main concerns and interests of the young Hegel's political texts are maintained and even further developed in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, in order to ratify its centrality.

²¹ "The I is also the transition from blank indefiniteness to the distinct and definite establishment of a definite content and object [...]" (Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* § 6)

²² "Since I have the possibility of determining myself in this or that way, since I have the power of choice, I possess caprice [*Willkür*], or what is commonly called freedom. This choice is due to the universality of the will, enabling me to make my own this thing or another. This possession is a particular content, which is therefore not adequate to me, but separated from me, and is mine only in possibility; just as I am the possibility of bringing myself into coincidence with it. Hence choice is due to the indeterminateness of the I, and to the determinateness of a content. But as to this content the will is not free, although it has in itself formally the side of infinitude" (§ 15 Addition).

in a way that the freedom of will itself is the product of the sublation of the impulses or necessities by means of each one's self-determination within a context that is considered but surpassed as well.

Albeit one-sided, those two models are also half complete for Hegel. The liberal model depicts the key elements of personal freedom as the singular capacity of acting beyond the natural impulses conditioning human existence, and, as said, the Kantian model of moral freedom is representative of the possibility itself of will by establishing a theorization about which type of the existing choices can be preferred. Looking at those positive sides of each theory, a synthesis of them can make a third model, the Hegelian model contended in what follows:

What we properly call will contains the two above-mentioned elements. The I is, first of all, as such, pure activity, the universal which is by itself. Next this universal determines itself, and so far is no longer by itself, but establishes itself as another, and ceases to be the universal. [...] Here a man is not one-sided, but limits himself willingly in reference to another, and yet in this limitation knows himself as himself. In this determination he does not feel himself determined, but in the contemplation of the other as another has the feeling of himself. Freedom also lies neither in indeterminateness nor in determinateness, but in both. The willful man has a will which limits itself wholly to a particular object, and if he has not this will, he supposes himself not to be free. But the will is not bound to a particular object, but must go further, for the nature of the will is not to be one-sided and confined. Free will consists in willing a definite object, but in so doing to be by itself and to return again into the universal (Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §7 Addition).

In this third model, freedom means that one will perform in activities and with objects recognized as part of the action executed. Hegel indicates that this is will in its accurate idea, "since will has as its object, content, and end, universality itself, and thus assumes the form of the infinite, it is free not only in itself or implicitly, but for itself or explicitly" (Hegel, § 21). The will is, therefore, self-consciousness and reveals as absolute freedom by performing as a free will that pursues its free will. This implies, on the one hand, the specific ends that the individuals will decide regarding the given conditions and circumstances of life, contrary to the formulas defining freedom negatively, like liberalism, and generally, as it is Kant. On

the other hand, it also entails that freedom is attainable in the objects that can be part of without losing or diminishing itself. This makes the famous definition of Hegel's *Right*, by which he claims that it is "the realization of free will" (§ 29).

Moreover, the Hegelian model of freedom postulates that it is realized *in reference to another* by whose presence the conditions of knowing oneself as oneself in the actions performed realizes freedom. Such presence of the other implies the existence of limitations, but they do not determine will; indeed, the realization of will sublatum (fulfilling-by-surpassing) the limitations that might be included in duties represent a stance for mutual recognition by means of such realization of free will. Hegel explains that this concrete freedom can be seen in *friendship* and *love*. These forms of intersubjective relations that can be traced back to his early writings and the dialectic of master and slave are indicated to have the structure that, following the contemporary interpretation of Axel Honneth (2014), the institutional complexes of modern society revealed as objective forms of organization and network of practical interactions.

All in all, Hegel's practical philosophy places freedom in the dimension of the social world of modern societies. He establishes a judgment without precedents by which the universal autonomy attributed to all and declared by law in modern times must be assessed *in* such spheres of social institutions, practices, and values. To do so, at the end of the *Introduction* of *The Philosophy of Right*, Hegel declares that freedom must be analyzed in its objective development in every social stance that it is embodied and departing from that of *Abstract Right* up to *Morality* and *Ethical Life*. Thus, freedom must be dialectically examined by capturing a positive moment (content or result) from the determinacies of the concept that unfold in its possibilities and, lastly, assuring the institutional complexes containing the realization of freedom in their historically organized conditions and specific network of practical relations and forms of interaction. In this sense, Hegel's practical philosophy exposes crucial moments in which free will is realized in modern social institutions.

Examining freedom in the three stances of Abstract right, Morality, and Ethical life recreates the incorporation of Reason into the Objective spirit represented in social institutions capable of supporting such realization of free will. This part of Hegel's system

aims to the exposition of the subjective and objective moments that impulse the transit from the *personal freedom* throughout the *moral freedom* up to the *social freedom*, as Neuhouser (2000) calls those instances, in the modern institutions of *Family*, *Civil society* and *the State*. In this sense, Hegel's practical philosophy is both subjective and objective, normative and descriptive, moral and ethical, political and sociological (Neuhouser 2000; Honneth 2014, 1996), and, above all, immanent to the institutional complexes in which freedom reveals, in reality, as organized, rational structures and patterns of action, values, and interests supporting human forms of interaction.

Turning into self-determination in Hegel, modern autonomy takes the form of a principle that should be placed and assessed within those institutional complexes historically present in the social sphere. To arrive at this point, Hegel disposed that the idea of free will has partially taken place, first, in the abstractions of right, by which individuals exercise their freedom in the form of subjective rights that allow the individual to recognize the right she has as another person, at the same time that the individual can distance herself from their impulses by means of this negative moment of self-determination; and, second, free will has been partially present in the moment of morality by which individuals can determine positively the choices leading to action through a self-reflective decision. Nevertheless, only in the third stance of the ethical life is free will fully encountered by means of the sublation (*Aufhebung*) of the previous two moments acting in the social spheres (in the institutional complexes), with others and under certain conditioning circumstances, in a way that the individual can fulfill her will and be recognized as much as she recognizes the others involved.

Ethical life is particularly seen as the moment of realization of freedom, assuming that the stances of Abstract life and Morality are included and performed in favor of freedom. Moreover, the step-forward from those two moments of Abstract Right and Morality (corresponding to the main tendencies of freedom of modernity) is succinctly presented by the relation between *duty* and *liberation* (§149) included in the institutional complexes of the social sphere. It means that the model of freedom elaborated by Hegel based on a self-determined free will realized in reference to another is to be found in correspondence with

the transition to the moment of Ethical life, sublating the one-sidedness of the other moments characterized by certain burdens²³.

For Hegel, such sublation is at stake in three institutional complexes of modern society: *Family*, *Civil society*, and *the State*. Each has a structure in accordance with an organized objective and particular elements but also includes universal components corresponding to the idea of freedom promoting the realization of free will, as well as institutionalized practices of recognition encouraging the formation of the being for an ethical life. Each of these two latter normative moments, following the contemporary insights offered by Rahel Jaeggi (2018), indicates a learning process and a tendency towards the realization of ethical life that entails a certain level of experience and cognition effective in practice, and, therefore, a certain form of conscious-interactive ethical subjectification.

Family presents the primary form of immediate satisfaction of needs for a subject that knows herself as part of a social group by means of the reciprocal relation of love. In § 158 of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel says: “The family is the direct substantive reality of spirit. The unity of the family is one of feeling, the feeling of love [...]” and adds about love that it can be understood as “[...] the consciousness of the unity of myself with another. I am not separate and isolated, but win my self-consciousness only by renouncing my independent existence and by knowing myself as a unity of myself with another and of another with me”. Thus, Family is a social sphere of modern society in which the individual’s self-determination takes place through an experience and acknowledgment of feelings²⁴ that support the immediate satisfaction of needs by performing mutual love and assistance (§164). Here, one is neither limited by letting one’s desires and passions (positively or negatively) to the partner shape the relation nor by giving up oneself and subordinating to the other’s will;

²³ “A duty or obligation appears as a limitation merely of undetermined subjectivity and abstract freedom, or of the impulse of the natural will, or of the moral will which fixes upon its undetermined good capriciously. But in point of fact the individual finds in duty liberation. He is freed from subjection to mere natural impulse; he is freed from the dependence which he as subjective and particular felt towards moral permission and command; he is freed, also, from that indefinite subjectivity, which does not issue in the objective realization implied in action, but remains wrapped up in its own unreality. In duty the individual freely enters upon a liberty that is substantive” (Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* §149).

²⁴ See §163 in which Hegel elaborated his conception of marriage as an ethical practical of mutual recognition in a direct contrast with the Kantian conception of this institution as a legal contract.

one is limited by oneself to set a reciprocal relationship in which the existence of each partner is indispensable for the other.

Civil society is a second institution of modern society in which the formation of Ethical life can be affirmed. It is a superior moment of the ethical life regarding the sublation of the realization of the self by means of the reciprocal feelings of love assistance in the Family. The main difference is that civil society has a less stable network of interactions than Family. The linkage given by nature to the bourgeois modern family is replaced by the artificial exchange of contracts between randomly established parties. Civil society is steered by the institution of the *market* made of the exchange of goods and assets. This social institution organizes and sets a *system of necessities* that encourages individuals to pursue their particular interests to fulfill their necessities. Therefore, Civil society is qualitatively different regarding the form of realization of will. The individual can figure out by herself and pursue the satisfaction of the necessities by performing a capacity to compromise to realize the action agreed upon in a contract.

In contrast with the self-limitation induced by the structure of recognition in the context of Family, the individual can experience the surpassing of those enabling ethical burdens at the level of feelings by realizing his figured will and, still, be recognized by others and recognize them as parties involved in the exchange interaction following their free wills. Moreover, it refines the process of formation of will in its ethical form (throughout *labor*) since the market induces the individual to sufficiently elaborate its necessity as a rational self-interest to present it in such institution as an offer or supply. On a higher level, this form of interaction and recognition enhances the existence of free will in its ethical form because the mediation of the market laws and the legally established form of the agreement applies generally to the members of society regardless of their natural impulses, desires or even the traditional circumstances to which they are tied. Nevertheless, it is also implicated in this same trait that the full realization of ethical life, as a general reciprocal recognition taking place universally in society, still falls short. The realization of freedom as a self-determined will in universal terms is limited to the level of strategic interactions mediated by the system of necessities characterized by the market.

The State should be the moment of overcoming the gap between the self-interests reciprocally recognized as particular in the market and the universal cooperation for the infinite existence of the will in the form of ethical life. Whereas the interactions in Civil society are carried out by private activities, in the State, interactions are driven by activities that include the figuration and performing of a common will made from their own. The experience here is to be part of a general will that has already been provided with the elements to be part of; thus, the actions displayed are perceived as internally intertwined in realizing universal freedom. Reciprocal recognition in interaction takes the form of *cooperation* supported by a common set of universal principles and shared beliefs guiding actions. As such, the State is the moment of realization of the forms of the ethical will presented in the previous stages as feelings and rational interests in cooperation. It is represented as the moment of culmination of the formation of the will to perform as the vehicle of realization of freedom by mutual recognition in social interaction.

Ethical life portrays the realization of freedom with its three stages and shows how the two one-sided spheres of Abstract law and Morality are subsumed as necessary moments for its realization. In each of the partial stages of ethical life, there is an institutionalized form of recognition guaranteed by law, and there is an institutionalized pattern of practical relations that Hegel dispenses to speak in favor of the realization of freedom. Thus, Hegel recreates the functioning of modern society with those spheres adapted to the historical existence of institutional complexes under the principle of self-determination and the presupposition that this must find reality by sublating the obstacles displayed at its development in each stage.

The consequences of this are remarkable for the idea of political autonomy underlying the impulse of politicization that characterizes modern citizenship and its inner contradictions. In a wide sense, political actions can only be fully attained if they are placed in the dimension of social relations and the institutions to which they are linked. Hegel reveals that this social world is the dimension where the subjects' autonomy must be examined. Therefore, based on Hegel's practical philosophy, this autonomy is the subjective principle entangled in various institutionally and historically mediated circumstances that

must be revealed and confronted to fulfill its *telos* as freedom. There is, in Hegel, the lesson that any form of representation and realization, theoretical and practical, normative and descriptive of political autonomy, must be aware of the social circumstances underlying it. Accordingly, and despite Hegel's ambivalence regarding the concept of citizenship itself particularly considered in the opening paragraphs of *The State*, the notion of political autonomy can be enquired about assuming such a legacy. Indeed, Hegel did not consider a complete identification of political will with an idea of citizenship as a concrete universal radical praxis of politicization -therefore active transformation- of the social world since freedom is assumed in the judgment of the *Absolute spirit* by which every subjective and objective moment in the course of realization of freedom is teleologically and idealistically sublated. However, there are moments of politicization in which the universal particularization of liberty as the development of consciousness *in* the social world implies a merging of the institutions of freedom and the individual's free will into one uncontradictory thing. The internal moments of this process that can be named moments of politicization are specifically distinguishable, on the one hand, in the situations of alienation and estrangement of the individual's particular will and the social institutions of Abstract right, Morality, and Ethical life considered from the perspective of the transit to the State as an imperfect realization of freedom; and, on other hand, in the moment of assumption –and therefore recovery- of the one self-will within the institutions in which the mutual recognition is possible (Family, Civil society and the State).

Exemplary, some of the difficulties of having predestined the moments of politicization to a teleological and idealistic sublation of those two moments of contradiction and imperfection of freedom can be seen particularly expressed in the treatment of the category of modern citizenship that Hegel proposes at the beginning of the paragraphs of *the State* in the *Philosophy of Right*. The citizen is, sometimes, the subject that is thoroughly identified with the power of the State (§258); but the citizen is also the one having an active role whose participation in the community is the core of the definition, as mentioned in another paragraph (§261). Moreover, the citizen is again mentioned as a patriotic of the constitution in another one (§258). These are evidence for the internal contradictory and

imperfect moments that can underlie the singularity of a problem such as citizenship in Hegel's thought and in modernity itself. Hegel reconciles the contradictory characterization of citizenship in paragraph §257 by declaring them as internal necessary moments for realizing *the State* itself as universality and particularity. Therefore, the citizen is part of the reality of *the State* as he performs as an active participant in the community and as she acts as a patriotic whose participation is in accordance with the political state of the constitution. These internal moments of the realization of freedom in *the State* are full of contradictions in modern society. However, as in other cases, Hegel's political philosophy reduces the conflicts overlying modern practical problems by praising the positive and rational tools at the dispense of social institutions to overcome the difficulties. For the case of citizenship, Hegel emphasizes the advantage of the security that the State can offer to individuals against problems threatening their lives, amongst other benefits against, for instance, poverty that its realization can bring (§ 260). As such, the overestimation of the rational idea of *the State* leads to an idealistic reconciliation of the modern problem of citizenship, excluding the conflicts historically and externally related to its statal rationality and diminishing the moments of politicization defining the singularity of the idea of citizenship, as Marx did and deepened.

Marx and the political revolution of the emancipated human citizenry

Marx's early critique of modern political institutions in the name of a universal human essence (*Gattungswesen*) and the subsequent unmasking of the capitalist social relations revealing the exploitation of human labor that it requires led to a critical conception of the entire modern social world and the logical and historical necessity of its transformation by means of political action. His work has a distinguishable claim for human politicization that reflects a radical idea of the emancipation of the citizenry. In Marx's critical oeuvre, such can be found as a negative claim for the change of the historical and social reality in both his attack the political alienation in the early writings linked to the context of the discussion of the Hegelian State and his later treatment of the *commodity form* and the *legal form* in the analytical context of the Capital. Insofar Marx provides a basis for a critical theory of social relations that implies the impulse of their transformation throughout political action; it is the

appropriate place to examine the idea of modern citizenship that is trapped in the characterized epistemological, anthropological, and ontological contradictions embodying the modern institutions and the principle of free subjectivity underlying them. Following this, citizenship can obtain a dialectical definition as a kind of politicization of the social world stemming from a negative subjective experience that departs from Marx's theoretical frame. The explanation can be reconstructed in three moments: the critique of political emancipation, the claim of universal politicization underlying the idea of human emancipation, and the critique of subjective rights.

Human emancipation

The problems of modern citizenship are accurately rendered in the critical analysis of the contradictions between politics and society carried out in Marx's work by means of the central discussion of *the rights of the citizen* and *the rights of man* in *On the Jewish Question*. In the context of a confrontation with Bruno Bauer about the political situation of the Jews in Germany and the secularization of the modern State, Marx elaborates a critique of modern citizenship by linking the enacted rights to a guarantee for political participation within the domain of the social relations characterized by him -in historical terms- as the civil society ruled by the interest of the bourgeoisie on the private property and individual egoism. The reality of citizenship is the existence of a pre-political state of things overlying the realm of politics (as a public relation related to the state as its guarantor and the citizens' rights to participation, and within the state itself as a political body that exercises power under democratic presuppositions). The essentials of Marx's profound analysis is contented in one paragraph:

Man as a member of civil society, unpolitical man, inevitably appears, however, as the *natural man*. The "rights of man" appears as "natural rights," because *conscious activity* is concentrated on the *political act*. *Egoistic* man is the passive result of the dissolved society, a result that is *simply found in existence*, an object of *immediate certainty*, therefore a *natural object*. The *political revolution* resolves civil life into its component parts, without *revolutionizing* these components themselves or subjecting them to criticism. It regards civil society, the world of needs, labor, private interests, civil law, as the *basis of its*

existence, as a *precondition* not requiring further substantiation and therefore as its *natural basis*. Finally, man as a member of civil society is held to be man in the proper sense, *homme* as distinct from *citoyen*, because he is man in his sensuous, individual, *immediate* existence, whereas *political* man is only abstract, artificial man, man as an *allegorical, juridical* person. The real man is recognized only in the shape of the *egoistic* individual, the *true* man is recognized only in the shape of the *abstract citizen* (Marx 1992 p. 233-234)²⁵.

The historical modern relationships inaugurated by the bourgeois revolution against the *Ancient Regime* led Marx to say that the categories of rights in *the Declaration* reflect, in fact, a “twofold life” of the *homme* -as a political member of the state and as a private individual-; therefore, human existence appears unreconciled, fragmented and contradictory. Marx's critique of citizenship is not unilateral in that it restricts its scope to contrast the abstractions of the modern political state to the reality of imperfections or inconsistencies. The critique is directed against the twofold life of the actual human existence as a political agent and as an individual while certain privileges, differences, and inequalities are maintained.

Accordingly, Marx's critique is developed dialectically, revealing the modern historical contradictions steering modernity and underlying the existing figures of the *citizen* and the *bourgeois*, the *public* and the *private*, the *State* and the *civil society*. Marx proceeds by confronting the abstract universality of citizenship as an illusion, an unreality, and a contradictory historical condition in order to submit the political abstractions of modern politics to a radical critique and to enlighten the kind of political praxis capable of transforming the social world entirely as a totality. The importance of this consists, in the first place, that Marx's approach to citizenship is carried out not only in terms of rights or institutions -as liberals claim-, neither it is in terms of a claim on behalf of the enhancement of political participation pursuing the definition of a communal good, Marx analysis is done by means of a critique of the political mechanisms and processes that the modern social relations imply to operate in practice. Correspondingly, in second place, Marx shows what

²⁵ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/>

must be theoretically claimed in order to practically surpass the barriers agreed and naturalized by the bourgeoisie's interest in a particular operation of society. All these issues are grasped through Marx's dialectical analysis of political and human emancipation concepts.

Political emancipation refers to the modern historical process of differentiation of the political sphere, including both the state and political participation, from the ancient *regime* of privileges, absolutism, and the economic relations of feudalism. From a historicist perspective, political emancipation is a step forward when comparing the old feudalist regime of social relations because the discourse of the rights of the citizen supports modern citizenship, contending the political and moral autonomy of subjects²⁶.

Marx's elemental analysis of political emancipation is the explanation and assumption of an *impulse of politicization* underlying the modern principle of political autonomy, despite its interpretation as individual freedom. The rights of man and the rights of the citizen are the outcomes of a process of politicization carried out by the bourgeoisie as the historical political subject of early modernity, and the liberal State and the guaranties of personal freedom display the essence of such modern political emancipation. Therefore, the Kantian ideal of moral freedom supporting the use autonomous of public reason and the Hegelian presupposition of a reconciled ethical life in the State, both encompassed within the principle of modern subjectivity that surpassed the unnaturalistic and anthropological characterizations of the social being in the early modernity, are reflected in Marx's words dedicated to the event of political emancipation, in a general manner and as a historical concern.

The reflection of political emancipation suggests that, albeit idealistic, the two philosophies that closely followed the revolutionary events in France as part of their illusions and motives correspond to an undeniable impulse of politicization haunting the political life of the modern subject. It can be confirmed in Kant's idea of public autonomy and in the

²⁶ Unmistakable, Marx estimates that Man and the State were emancipated from religion as a consequence of a political revolution that represented a big step forward "The political revolution [...] overthrew this sovereign power and raised state affairs to become affairs of the people, which constituted the political state as a matter of *general* concern, that is, as a real state, necessarily smashed all estates, corporations, guilds, and privileges, since they were all manifestations of the separation of the people from the community".

Hegelian reflexivity of the self being oriented to the realization of the free will attaining the institutional complexes of the modern social world. The evidence that all this is present in Marx rests on his recognition of rights as the product of a process of generalization of a moral universal identity that ontologizes a realm of political relations and that, in a contradictory way, also dissolves external powers restraining the political autonomy and secures the defective reality of such an idea in the material and historical conditions of modern life²⁷.

However, as it is also implied there, political emancipation is an abstract generalization of citizenship to secure the historical being of a man performing as an egotistical individual²⁸. Accordingly, Marx states that political emancipation “[...] is not the final form of human emancipation in general, but it is the final form of human emancipation within the hitherto existing world order”. Political emancipation achieves emancipation ideally and contradictorily because it is produced by the modern bourgeois political revolution that is merely the disentanglement of the public life from the private, as it is of the political state from religion, in a way that the former cannot interfere in the latter²⁹. Following that, the bourgeois politicization of the modern State carried out by means of the rights of the citizen appears as a depoliticization of the idea of political citizenship itself inasmuch it is an

27 “[...] the completion of the idealism of the state was at the same time the completion of the materialism of civil society. Throwing off the political yoke meant at the same time throwing off the bonds which restrained the egoistic spirit of civil society. Political emancipation was, at the same time, the emancipation of civil society from politics, from having even the semblance of a universal content”.

28 “The political revolution thereby *abolished the political character of civil society*. It broke up civil society into its simple component parts; on the one hand, the *individuals*; on the other hand, the *material* and *spiritual* elements constituting the content of the life and social position of these individuals. It set free the political spirit, which had been, as it were, split up, partitioned, and dispersed in the various blind alleys of feudal society. It gathered the dispersed parts of the political spirit, freed it from its intermixture with civil life, and established it as the sphere of the community, the *general* concern of the nation, ideally independent of those *particular* elements of civil life. A person’s *distinct* activity and distinct situation in life were reduced to a merely individual significance. They no longer constituted the general relation of the individual to the state as a whole. Public affairs as such, on the other hand, became the general affair of each individual, and the political function became the individual’s general function”.

29 “The limits of political emancipation are evident at once from the fact that the state can free itself from a restriction without man being really free from this restriction, that the state can be a *free state* [*Freistaat*, which also means republic] without man being a *free man*. [...] the political emancipators go so far as to reduce citizenship, and the *political community*, to a mere means for maintaining these so-called rights of man, that, therefore, the *citoyen* is declared to be the servant of egotistic *homme*, that the sphere in which man acts as a communal being is degraded to a level below the sphere in which he acts as a partial being, and that, finally, it is not man as *citoyen*, but man as private individual [*bourgeois*] who is considered to be the *essential* and *true* man”.

abstraction masking the private interest of the man (the bourgeois). The institutional organization of the civil society here implies the transubstantiation of modern political autonomy into a principle of individual freedom by which the political character of modern social relations is curtailed. Marx explicitly says this in the fragment already quoted: “The political revolution thereby *abolished* the *political character of civil society*. It broke up civil society into its simple component parts: on the one hand, the *individuals*; on the other hand, the *material* and *spiritual* elements constituting the content of the life and social position of these individual”.

Therefore, a depoliticization occurred at the level of the social relations of the *man* while the political arena displayed as the realm of the decisions taken on behalf of a general will as an abstract public interest by means of the state’s mechanisms and the delimitation of processes guided by the protections for basic rights. Therefore, the restrictions stemming from mediated, limited, and granted modern politics support a countereffect of depoliticization of the political autonomy rising in contemporary history. The idea of the “twofold life” of the *homme* that occurs in the process of abstracting the political character of the modern society and the parallel process of setting an unpolitical nature for several social institutions -such as the market- imply an undisclosed logic of depoliticization of the modern subjectivity. The clarification of a political instance at the level of the modern institutional constitution of the State relations is also the liberation of an unpolitical domain at the level of the interactions driven by the necessities of the individuals. In this sense, Marx offers a more detailed guide for understanding the depoliticization of the subject’s political autonomy regarding the modern social dynamics. For the political subject, it implies

[...] that man frees himself through the *medium of the state*, that he frees himself *politically* from a limitation when, in contradiction with himself, he raises himself above this limitation in an *abstract, limited*, and partial way. It follows further that, by freeing himself *politically*, man frees himself in a *roundabout way*, through an *intermediary*, although an *essential intermediary* (Marx 1992 p. 232).

Marx portrays here the depoliticizing trait of the idea of *political emancipation*, pointing directly at the original demarcation of the spheres of the State and the Civil society

that occurred practically. The boundaries between them represent a restriction for politics to decide over the given social relations. Those boundaries induce the “twofold life” of the subject since the autonomy is itself a contradiction between political power and moral capacity. As a citizen, the autonomous subject is given into the realm of mechanisms and procedures of state politics; as a man, the autonomous subject is constrained by the arbitrary and haphazard social dynamics imposed by the productive relations.

Furthermore, the logic of depoliticization supporting those contradictions is depicted by Marx as an *indirect, mediated, and estranged* political experience of the practical subject in civil society. The existence of the State as the referee of the political game enforces the exercise of political freedom in a “roundabout way” by which subjects encounter the exercise of their power indirectly. The State is, thereby, an obstacle to displaying the subject’s power because it is limited to the enforceable rules enacted in accordance with the historical interests standing behind the formal rationality of legal procedures³⁰. Furthermore, the political subject is trapped in contexts of action with predefined thresholds. As Marx claims in the argumentative context of the abolition of requirements to vote, the political order presupposes private property as the basis of society and its politics³¹. Thus, the structural mediation of private property constitutes a political threshold because the legitimacy of the claims is under its approval; the conflicts exist within its boundaries, and the possible reforms do not surpass its authority³². Lastly, modern politics endorses a depoliticization of social

³⁰ Again here, the specific treatment of political emancipation aims to a critique of the Liberal constitutional state by which the indirect, as Brown (1995) has commented, “signals a ruse of power necessitated when the requisites of power’s legitimacy generate a promise upon which it cannot deliver; deviousness connotes the political culture of indirection and mediation inherent within, rather than accidental to, this political condition [...] In Marx’s account, the ruse of power peculiar to liberal constitutionalism centers upon grating freedom equality, and representation to abstract rather than concrete subjects. The substitution of abstract political subjects for actual ones not only forfeits the project of emancipation but resubjugates us precisely by emancipating substitutes for us -by emancipating our abstracted representatives in the state and naming this process “freedom”” (p, 106).

³¹ In *On the Jewish Question*, Marx says: “the political annulment of private property not only fails to abolish private property but even presupposes it”. Moreover, the critical analysis of private property and the modern state is considered since the writings dedicated to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right and extends up to the Manuscripts of 1844. In the former of these two contexts, Marx also indicates: “The significance of private property in the political state is its essential, its true significance [...] The political state is the true mirror of the various aspects of the concrete state. At its ultimate heights the state turns to be private property [...] Instead of making private property into a quality of citizenship, Hegel makes citizenship into a quality of property-holding” Cited in Avinieri (1968, p. 31).

³² See, Avinieri (1968, p. 8-40).

relations, reproducing the image and consciousness of a subject alienated in an egotistical identity. The society in which modern autonomy is displayed as the actions and interests of the egoistic individual reproduce personal freedom protected by negative liberties. Man is an estranged and particular subject to himself and others under the characterization promoted by the fake universalization of the bourgeoisie's identity. For Marx, the citizen is, therefore, "declared to be the servant of egoistic man" and the political rights are rendered to the so-called rights of such man identified with the functioning of the capitalist market. Therefore, politics is a strange activity for the men incapable of going beyond the private individual pursuing his particular interest³³. And consequently, this alienated use of power separates men from the community and their fellows³⁴.

There are complex ontological, epistemological, and anthropological relations overlying the functioning of the modern world that can be distinguishable in those three aspects portraying the irreconciliation between the essential spheres of the social world (the liberal-political regime, the capitalist market, and the Western culture) and the principle of subjectivity (as the political autonomy of the citizen-subject); however, they can altogether be graspable within a logic of depoliticization implying the undermining of political contesting. Inasmuch the political experience of the subject is defined by an *indirect*, *mediated*, and *estranged* power to decide over the given political regime, the generalized social interest, and the particular identities attributed, Marx inspires a profound revelation of the reality of the modern idea of citizenship. Moreover, in *On the Jewish Question*, Marx arrives at the bottom of those problems by means of a critical reflection on the idea of *political emancipation* that seeks to enhance and maintain the illusion and unreality of rights

³³ "None of the supposed rights of man, therefore, *go beyond* the egoistic man, man as he is, as a member of civil society, that is, an individual separated from the community, withdrawn into himself, wholly preoccupied with his private caprice" (Marx 1992).

³⁴ Christoph Menke (2020), remarkable comments about this point: "Because politically declared rights authorize the apolitical ("egoistical") human beings of civil society, however, the declaration of rights is at the same time the degradation of politics, its debasement to a mere means [...] The puzzle of the bourgeois declaration of equal rights is the puzzle of a self-reversal: it is the political act that authorizes apolitical human beings and thereby politics' deauthorization of itself – the politics of depoliticization. The revolutionary declaration of rights is the first and last political act: the relinquishing of political power by means of politics – politics for the last time".

and participation without revolutionizing the ground of the existing social relations. Political emancipation is the liberation of traditional and inherited personal bonds, not the real change of the social world. It means that modern-bourgeois politics assumes an unsurmountable threshold of what could be set into question and transformed of the social institutions, including the state, the market, and culture.

Human emancipation, in contrast, is the other idea dispensed in Marx's critique of modern politics by which the foundations securing the realm of unpolitical private interests must be surpassed. By *human emancipation*, Marx signals the idea of a radical transformation of the social world settled on the political, cognitive, and social alienation of human existence. Accordingly, a *human revolution* is what must be envisioned in order to realize the real dimensions of what the political revolution has disclosed and remains as a potentiality:

Only when the real, individual man re-absorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual human being has become a *species-being* in his everyday life, in his particular work, and in his particular situation, only when man has recognized and organized his “own powers” as *social* powers, and, consequently, no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of *political* power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished.

This is the closest idea that Marx gives for human emancipation in the text of 1843. It is not a positive definition but a negative one that aims to declare the necessity of a new political revolution capable of surpassing the shortcomings of political emancipation regarding the level of the bourgeois civil society. Such negativity implies, first and foremost, to grasp the blockages of the tendency towards the practical realization of the promise of freedom that modernity inaugurated with the promotion of the idea of autonomy and proclaimed with the rights that secured political emancipation. Accordingly, human emancipation recalls a revolutionary gesture capable of abolishing the practical constraints that oppose the real fulfillment of the idea of freedom. In abstract and historicist terms, political emancipation is necessary for human emancipation but insufficient to achieve the latter. Therefore, it is not at stake for Marx if political emancipation (rights and the Liberal state) is good or bad as a logical idea or rational discourse. Human emancipation aims to

grasp the real condition of man regarding the contradictory experience in everyday life and the distortion that those institutions and principles settled down by political emancipation can produce to attain such reality and transform it directly, immediately and pursuing the appropriate human ends.

Those are issues that can only be achieved by a kind of politicization that “no longer separates social power from himself” and originates in the power of the social existence of the human being capable of being “recognized” and “organized” as such. Then, the problems for achieving human emancipation are mainly those that separate power from one’s existence to act politically and, thereupon, those that block the capacity to recognize and organize such power. Marx’s early writings deal with this under the signature of *alienation*. It is the most important concept to capture the claim for human emancipation and understand how social life’s practical blocking operates in modern society. Accordingly, *alienation* is an encompassing idea that includes, reading Marx’s early writings in this sense, the logic of depoliticization stemming from three previously mentioned dimensions: political, epistemological, and anthropological. Unmistakably, this interpretation goes beyond the text of 1843. However, it must not be forgotten that *On the Jewish Question* is a text with significant importance for the intellectual development of the young Marx, moving from his critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right delineated in 1842 to the philosophical foundations of his critique to political-economy in 1844 and the conceptualization of the historical praxis in his assessment of Feuerbach’s critique of religion and the confrontation with the German philosophy in 1845 and 1846, respectively. In all these works, the problems encountered are overlaid by the specter of alienation.

The problem of alienation was early detected in the unsurmountable idealism of Hegel’s State, a kind of political alienation stemming from the excessive rationalization of the experience contented in the civil society; it evolved to be seen as a sort of concealed truth of the civil society that the institutional framework secured by the Liberal State and the discourse of modern citizenship contribute to hide; and, the problem of alienation arrived at the point to be considered as “the *abstract* existence of man as a mere *workman*” (*Manuscript II*) that implied the performing of human activity (*Labor*) of “quite alien to itself,

to man and to nature” (Manuscript II). This development of Marx’s treatment of alienation corresponds with the three stances of the logic of depoliticization previously identified as (i) the political display by the “roundabout way” of the exercise of power throughout the state and the grammar rights; (ii) the epistemological mediation of the possessive individualism in the rationality of the modern subjects by means of the ontological naturalization of private property secured by the protection of the rights of man; and, (iii) the anthropological negative trait represented in the total alienation of life through the abstraction of labor and its economic relation to private property and capital that Marx wholly disclosed in the Manuscripts.

Accordingly, the development from the concept of political alienation from the state (in the context of discussion with the Hegelian State) to the concept of human alienation from labor (within the economic relation of the productive forces under capitalism) contains an important moment in the text of 1843 regarding the formulation of a negative normativity contented in the idea of human emancipation as a gesture of a radical politicization aiming to surpass the alienation. Indeed, on short notice, this idea would take the form of a proletarian revolution, overthrowing all the barriers and creating a new human world.

The remarkable importance of Marx’s early writings for a critical theory of the politics of modern society consists in the formulation and development of the necessity of a political sublation of the *real alienation of the social experience in practice*. In the path towards the Manifesto in 1848, the idea of radical politics is captured in the critical treatment of private property as the fundamental institution shaping modern society and producing the alienation of human nature -seen as the activity that produces life by means of labor- with the products of his work, with the surrounding natural world of external objects, and with the other members of humanity. Against such a particular and historical state of things, it is precisely the development of a universal and transformative consciousness portrayed in the figure of the revolutionary subject of the proletariat as the class that directly and unmistakably experiences the suffering of the institutional functioning of the social world built on private property, and as the class that immediately and distinctly does not have the means to politically change the opposing situation -unless the proletariat assumes its historical position and develop the means to conquer power. Marx announces, in this sense, that the abolition

of private property as the basis of social existence becomes the revolutionary gesture historically located in the proletariat, as the subject representing the interest of humanity, because it expresses the universal experience of the negative situation imposed by the organization of the society over the private property.

A proletarian (universal) politicization

There are two significant elements in the evolution of Marx's thought from the text of 1843. On the one hand, as mentioned, the proletariat appears as the object of the process of alienation produced by private property as the base of society and as the subject of human interest aiming to surpass such negative conditions. On the other hand, Marx refines the historically grounded new materialist theory that allows him to capture the operation of capital concerning private property and labor precisely. This, specifically, offers a new insight for the logic of depoliticization pointer out here by means of the diagnosis of the function of law and rights within the form of the fetishism of capitalist relations. In the Manuscripts Marx states:

The relations of private property contain latent within them the relation of private property as *labour*, the relation of private property as *capital*, and the *mutual relation* of these two to one another. There is the production of human activity as *labour* – that is, as an activity quite alien to itself, to man and to nature, and therefore to consciousness and the expression of life – the *abstract* existence of man as a mere *workman* who may therefore daily fall from his filled void into the absolute void – into his social, and therefore actual, non-existence. On the other hand, there is the production of the object of human activity as *capital* – in which all the natural and social characteristic of the object is *extinguished*; in which private property has lost its natural and social quality (and therefore every political and social illusion, and is not associated with any *apparently* human relations) (Marx, *Manuscripts* [1844]).

With the relation of private property and capital with labor, the political transformation of society must be announced as the emancipation of the working class from the entire world of human relations structured over the alienation of labor by its complex economic relationships with private property and capital. The disappearance of the proletariat becomes the universal interest of humanity because the working class embodies the negative

particularities that keep man separated from the products of free human labor and, therefore, separated from his world. Accordingly, the emancipation of the proletariat is the emancipation of humanity recognized and organized on human activity as the source of all the human wealth and not on the monetarist wealth stemming from the capitalist private property. Private Property is, then, what secures the materialist groundings for developing a critical theory of human relations in Marx. As widely known, it provides well-founded support for the Feuerbachian anthropology adopted by Marx in the early writings by virtue of which he can find his way out of the Hegelian system. Based on this, Marx postulates the abolition of private property as the liberation of human forces to produce the world. However, the confrontation with Feuerbach in the *Thesis* of 1845 and in the *German Ideology* (also including others such as Bauer, Stirner) will lead Marx to the analysis of liberation from the material circumstances shaping life as an eminently practical and historical task. Accordingly, there is a shifting movement from the critique of alienation from negative anthropology to the critique of the impoverishment of human existence from dialectical social relations and institutions forming the individual's consciousness under the historical conditions of Capitalism seen as an entire mode of production of life including science, law, culture, and morality³⁵.

The consequences of Marx's development of historical materialism for the impulse of politicization reflected in his work as the necessary practical transformation and revolution of society are remarkable here by his turn into a more complex descriptive pattern of society and a more difficult task for grasping the consequences. As long as the historical organization of the productive forces (as the material base of economic factors in which labor represents

³⁵ "The production of life, both as one's own in labour and of fresh life in procreation, now appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural, and on the other as a social relationship [...]. My relationship to my surroundings is my consciousness [...] For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation. Consciousness is therefore, from the very beginning a social product and remains so as long as men exist at all. [...] the sensuous world around [...] is not a thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same, but the product of industry and of the state of society; and, indeed, in the sense that it is an historical product, it is the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations, each standing on the shoulders of the preceding one, developing its industry and its intercourse, modifying its social system according to the changed needs. Even the objects of simplest "sensuous certainty" are only given to him through social development, industry and the commercial intercourse. The cherry-tree, like almost all fruit-trees, was, as is well-known, only a few centuries ago transplanted by commerce into our zone, and therefore only by this action of a definite society in a definite age [...]" (Marx, *German Ideology*).

the main source) predetermine human consciousness and its institutions (expressed in science and culture) in the historical, practical, and cultural dimensions of the social totality in which real subjects live, the political transformation is seen as a task that changes both the historical conscious safeguarded in the social institutions reproducing the totality and the historical organization of the productive forces embedded in the logic of capital.

The critique of subjective rights

According to that, *ideology appears as a central problem condensing the blockages and obstacles to the transformation of society*³⁶. This element is developed in Marx's way towards the formulation of the critique of political economy as a subjective element derived from the reification of human relations induced by the phenomena that Marx calls the “fetishism of commodities”, by which a product or outcome stemming from human activity is not seen anymore as such, but as naturally given object dispensed by the way things are. Ideology works as the grammar of social interaction reflecting the system of objective and unsurmountable economic laws of life; it sustains all the practical interactions imposed by the *commodity form* and the historical base of exploitation. Therefore, ideology is made from an inverted consciousness that corresponds to an inverted reality, in which the products of human activity in terms of the available science, culture, objects, and technique appear as an insurmountable reality for the practical subjects and in which the exploitation of labor is practically concealed.

Thus, the increased complexity of the social world and the difficulties in thinking about its transformation result from the multiple levels in which the negative experience is blocked, fragmented and separated. The critique of political economy condensed in the *Grundrisse* and the *Capital* indicates that, aside from the early problem of alienation by which the exploitation of the human activity of labor is masked and its essence as the authentic source of production is neglected, the compelling reality lived and reproduced by the practical subjects is built on a social dynamic governed by the circulation of commodities that gives this same appearance to the social relations maintaining it as simple

³⁶ This an important guidance for the analysis about the ideology of communicative interactions that display in Chapter 3.

unsurmountable reality governed by facts and driven by competence, and, moreover this dual dimension of reality synthesizes itself in the effective operation of ideological practices and institutions. All in all, the commodity as a basic unit of the entire economic dynamic of capital is itself a social relation that appears detached from the human process that has produced it and under such form, it also shapes the consciousness and institutions employed in practical life.

Those analytical differences arising from Marx's late writings impose a radical conception of the transformation of the society driven by Capitalism in modernity. Unmistakable, the transformation must be practical and total so that the social institutions and relations are changed according to the human essence of production and creation of the world and under the direction of a suitable consciousness. Nevertheless, the difficulties of realizing a new state of things beyond Capitalism are graspable by the same explanation dispensed by Marx. There are external repressing powers in support of the given state of things deriving from the social institutions captured by the capitalist ruling class and material and cognitive constraints that impede and foreclose the recognition and organization of the political actions oriented towards a radical transformation.

In Marx's later writings, the analysis of social relations under Capitalism leads to a precise explanation of the *forms* of reality by which such social order is maintained. By form, it means a universal standardized measure that simplifies the nature of things to be set into an estrange process of valorization. In Marx's view, this process allows the exchange value to be ascribed to any object, converting it into a commodity. Accordingly, a form is a synthesis of the process of exploitation and circulation that shapes the social reality and on which the ideological means derive their social validity. As mentioned, the basic form of capitalist relations is the *commodity form* by virtue of which humans are turned into competitive producers and individuals valued as sellers and buyers. However, Marx also remarkably adds to the basic form of social relations under capitalism a needed secondary one conceptualized as the *legal form* that supports the egoistical character of subjects as

juridical persons and the private legal contract as the institution validating the circulation of commodities and the separation between each person from the others³⁷.

The *commodity form* and the *legal form* constituting the social relations are significantly important for the critical analysis regarding the political transformation of society since their effects produce social blockages limiting the emancipatory possibilities. On the basic level, the experiential capacity of the worker is impeded because, as Marx said, the only thing he possesses is himself, which turns him into a thing. And, on the secondary level, any chance for developing such experience in order to be transformed into a political and social force is curtailed by the regime that legalizes exploitation or, at best, limits the scope of the political claims by means of the abstract provisions of presumed equality that undermines the interest of the disadvantaged ones³⁸. All in all, Capitalism does not operate without these two forms. They secure the reproduction of the production system based on the exploitation and circulation of commodities by one's identification as *producers* and as *juridical persons* as two sides of the same coin. Accordingly, the social world remains well shielded from deep structural transformations because the blockages against the struggle for emancipation are also deep-rooted in individual lives.

³⁷ In order that our owner of money may be able to find labour-power offered for sale as a commodity, various conditions must first be fulfilled. *The Exchange of commodities of itself implies no other relations of dependence than those which result from its own nature*. On this assumption, labour-power can appear upon the market as a commodity, only if, and so far as, its possessor, the individual whose labour-power it is, offers it for sale, or sells it, as a commodity. *In order that he may be able to do this, he must have it at his disposal, must be the untrammelled owner of his capacity for labour, i.e., of his person. He and the owner of money meet in the market, and deal with each other as on the basis of equal rights, with this difference alone, that one is buyer, the other seller; both, therefore, equal in the eyes of the law*. The continuance of this relation demands that the owner of the labour-power should sell it only for a definite period, for if he were to sell it rump and stump, once for all, he would be selling himself, converting himself from a free man into a slave, from an owner of a commodity into a commodity (Marx, *Capital Vol 1*).

³⁸ "This sphere that we are deserting, within whose boundaries the sale and purchase of labour-power goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. There alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, say of labour-power, are constrained only by their own free will. They contract as free agents, and the agreement they come to, is but the form in which they give legal expression to their common will. Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each disposes only of what is his own. And Bentham, because each looks only to himself" (Marx, *Capital*).

For Marx, the form of production of Capitalism gives rise to legal relations by which both the private property and the egotistic identity are safeguarded and promoted. Therefore, there is an internal connection between law and the production system as it is for the basic institution of property and the separated consciousness characterizing the individual modern subject. As the entire bourgeois doctrine of law attested, private law gains immense importance in the development of modern society because it constitutes the social institutions and principles that regulate the relations. After all, subjects are eminently seen as individuals oriented by their private interests in the exchange of property and the personal freedom to contract. Accordingly, as the Marxist legal scholar Evgeny Pashukanis (2003) remarkably stated, the analysis of the *legal form* carried out in Marx's late writings clarifies that law is not only an ideological apparatus that keeps the individual's consciousness trapped in its misrepresenting effects, but the law is itself a social relation by which the isolated subjects acquired the individualistic personality needed to see themselves as economic agents ready for the logic of exchange in the market.

Thus, following Pashukanis' Marxist theory of law, Law is a special social relation that, under the rule of the commodity exchange, provides the practical resources to be in Capitalism³⁹. It is, therefore, not so entirely a source of mechanisms to falsify consciousness as it is one for practical reasoning that keeps the given capitalist system operating⁴⁰. Such is realized by the institutionalized and effective practical validity of *subjective rights* as the entitlements individuals possess in accordance with the consensus of rightness prevailing in society. According to this, it is interesting to see how the reflection of the rights of man and the rights of citizens carried out by the young Marx in *On the Jewish Question* relates to this view of his late writings. As we have seen before, the declared liberal rights constituted thresholds processing social experience by a logic of depoliticization burdening political action with indirect, mediating, and estrange mechanisms. The subjective rights deriving

³⁹ "The legal system differs from every other form of social system precisely in that it deals with private, isolated subjects. The legal norm acquires its *differentia specifica*, marking it out from the general mass of ethical, aesthetic, utilitarian and other such regulation, precisely because it presupposes a person endowed with rights on the basis of which he actively makes claims" (Pashukanis, 1978, p. 101).

⁴⁰ The form of law with its aspect of subjective right (*Berechtigung*) is born in a society of isolated bearers of private egoistic interests. If all economic life is to be built on the principle of agreement between autonomous wills, every social function, in reflecting this, assumes a legal character (Pashukanis, 1978, p. 103).

from the capitalist legal form induce blockages, fragmentations, and separations directly in the capacity for experiencing the world. In both cases, we encounter the elements and origins of the possibility of constructing the emancipatory power that Marx famously called to join in the messianic figure of the proletariat practically supported in the recognition and organization of the negative experiences of class in the *Manifesto*.

Based on that, the inspiration of the *proletarian revolution* still signals today the gesture of a radical politicization of social relations aiming to surpass the blockages maintaining human social power separate from the operation of social institutions such as the Liberal State and the economic, social relations, as the young Marx analyzed; furthermore, such gesture signals the politicization of the social world aiming to confront the forms of the inhumane capitalist society perpetuating injustices and inequalities. These are such important lessons informing any horizon of politics assuming the necessity of the radical transformation of the social world on the promises carried out by modernity under the principles of subjective freedom and political autonomy. However, as the evolution of these ideas in modernity reveals in the personification of their most important intellectual representatives (Kant, Hegel, and Marx), such normative standards have been gradually displaced to a position that no longer directly informs political praxis. The promises of modernity supporting the universal ideals of freedom and equality have been forced to be demanded and accomplished within the social circumstances in which political autonomy is reflected as a necessity and -foremost- inside the social contexts, blocking the development of a fair human experience. Not only in logical terms but in historical ones, the development of the political experience of autonomy is also a task that has intensified its necessity under the evolution of Capitalism in the last century. It is not only that the social institutions and political values inspired by the modern principles of freedom and equality have been dismantled, but it is a degenerative process of the organization of society in which the political nature of subjects as citizens has been repressed.

Final remarks on the social philosophy of modern citizenship

Reassuring a critical approach for analyzing the idea of citizenship reconstructed up to here, this chapter aims to display an examination of political autonomy in contrast with

the standard of social relations established in modernity. Accordingly, the hypothesis supporting this analysis implies that the possibilities for citizenship to portray as a politicization activity carried out by autonomous subjects appear in modernity, but the reverting force of conservation of the instituted social world secured by the instauration of the capitalist economy favors an opposite tendency of depoliticization that curtails such assumed idea of citizenship and its emancipatory effects for politics. To do so, this chapter reconstructed the emancipatory impulse of modern society that can be located in the gradual tendency of placing political autonomy (as the subjective freedom) in the social modern world. Therefore, the chapter is dedicated to reconstructing the political and social philosophies of citizenship to support the hypothesis that the concept of citizenship defined is shaped by the political autonomy of subjects to politicize the social world.

As mentioned, modern citizenship reveals its problematic nature in the tension between political autonomy and the historical social relations of modernity. In close relation to that, the practical philosophies of Kant, Hegel, and Marx, pointing beyond the natural law, inform a critical approach to citizenship because their political reflections stem from the assumption of a decentered subjectivity in which freedom becomes the distinctive characteristic of human beings. Moreover, the order of those names describes a gradual tendency towards the insertion of citizenship in modern social relations as a reflective movement in which freedom is at stake. From the open claim to use reason publicly as a logical necessity of the autonomous will to the foreseen of human emancipation resting on the idea of a revolution driven by the class that represents the universal interest of humanity, throughout the process of realization of the free will within institutional complexes of civil society, Kant, Marx, and Hegel were -and still are- a new setting for assessing the idea of citizenship. As it is portrayed here, their practical philosophies support the basic meaning of citizenship concerning the recognition of subjects as political beings when what is at stake is the awareness, appropriation, and determination of the social world in which they live. Thus, keeping sight of their philosophies as the basis for any reflection concerning the ethical-political realizations of subjective freedom can enable an idea of citizenship in which politicization becomes an essential standard of judgment for the current status of political

autonomy that is concerned with the rationalization of dominium and the confrontation of the contemporary given social-historical institutions and discourses.

IV. Freedom and equality in the idea of citizenship. Contours of a critical overview of contemporary politics.

The contradictory form of modern citizenship

After a long history implicated in the above-mentioned philosophical landmarks, the idea of citizenship encountered a particular reality in modernity considering the justifications provided by the political discourse and the establishment of suitable social institutions. In such a sense, citizenship acquired a *form* within the theoretical and practical contradictions shaping the historical dynamism of modern society. On the one hand, the origins of the modern discourse of citizenship were drawn in the tensions between liberalism and republicanism that are expressed in the dual formulation of the rights of *man* and the *citizen* in the *Declaration* of 1789. On the other hand, in the evolution of modern citizenship up to contemporary times, the idea of citizenship suggests a variety of experiences stemming from the institutions and interactions of the social sphere. Accordingly, an account of the problem of citizenship must no longer be placed in pure normative terms. The synthesis that the *Declaration* represents for the theoretical formulations of political modernity must be judged within the social experience stemming from the discourses, institutions, and practical interactions formed historically. That is to say, by drawing the conditions in which an individual can be subjected to the power and by which she can be a subject of power.

The characterizations of citizenship given by the status of *membership* and *participation* reconstructed in the first chapter are insufficient in accordance with the *principle of subjectivity* fueling the establishment of eighteenth-century modernity and the political power implicated in its institutions. It means that the political implications prescribed in the institutions of political obligation and communitarian commitment of the self (given by the fact of being born in the territory of a State or sharing with others the

common roots of a particular *ethnos*) become unnaturalized and reflective because of processes of modernization, in which different spheres and institutions are decoupled and differentiated from the political power that can be presumably ascribed to the citizens in the democratic organization of society. It does not only mean that classical normative ideas referring to the realm of politics can be contested, but it also means that the entire world of social relations and its foundations acquire more complexity and become more problematic. As Etienne Balibar (2014) argues, the modern rupture with the *Ancient Regime* of privileges and arbitrary power possesses a significant relevance for the political ideals and social institutions that link the idea of citizenship to the epistemological, ontological, and anthropological problems characterizing this stage of history. Thus, citizenship can be seen as an expression of a historical evolution of contradictions inasmuch it can be attained as a point of collision and tension of the different forms of making sense of reality, envisioning the social order, assuming the relation between the subjects and the powers that constitute them. Such implies that the contradictions remarkable disclosed by Marx are exemplary of the dynamics of steering the politics of modernity within the tension between the exercise of individual freedom and its subversions caused by disruptive movements invoking equality; that also means, within the confrontations of the universalism of man and its particularities (bourgeois, women, migrants, indigenous, and so on).

The right to politics

In accordance with that basis and as a reference, modern citizenship is graspable in the *first moment* following dialectical tensions between an impulse of politicization that characterizes the early bourgeois revolutions and the establishment of the juridical and institutional guarantees securing their achievements. This is what appeared promulgated in the *Declaration* as the principle of freedom, particularized in the right to property and its negative individual guarantees, and, as the principle of equality, expressed in the positive public rights of participation in politics. According to Balibar, this corresponds to the first aporetic moment of modern politics that gives birth to a *universal principle of the right to politics* by which citizenship constitutes itself as a practical idea that, beyond its abstract and normative status, shall support infinite encounters of subversion and subjugation with the

ideals and institutions historically particularizing freedom and equality. This is so because the historical interest of the European bourgeoisie practically exceeded the legal character of politics expressed in rights. Despite the overemphasized discourse of rights, the idea of modern citizenship included a necessity to stabilize a new social world created by the most outstanding display of politicization in history: the French Revolution.

Thus, modern citizenship is defined by the politicizing impulse of the revolution and the interest struggling with rationalizing its consequences in accordance with their particular social interest. That is precisely how the dual character of modernization is contented in the idea of modern citizenship. On the one hand, it reflects an idea of political autonomy that signals radical transforming effects in particular claims, and on the other hand, it becomes a rationalized discourse supporting the foundation of social institutions on behalf of generalized particular interests. Therefore, the contradictions of citizenship can be estimated in the debate about the fundamental concepts of *individual freedom* and *popular sovereignty* that Locke and Rousseau inspired. The modern principle of subjectivity is, therefore, firstly represented by a contradictory character located in the fragmentation of autonomy as a symptom of an epistemological rupture that cannot be reconciled in practice. Accordingly, political autonomy was not coherently incorporated into modern law and politics. In fact, the Rousseaunian *subject* and the Lockean *individuum* correspond to a profound confrontation concerning the presuppositions of human nature with ontological implications regarding the foundations of modern society. Balibar summarizes these problems as follows:

The Rousseaunian subject is immediately a legislator, whose anthropological characteristic par excellence is a conscience that expresses in one's internal forum the difference between the particular and the general interest, and thus the individual will and the general will, submitting the former to the latter and affirming the superior rights of the community at the heart of individuality. In contrast, the Lockean individual, and even more, that of the classical economists (Smith), is an agent whose autonomy of decision rests on the idea, which Locke placed at the center of his political philosophy, of "property in one self" ("proprietor of one's Person," which Macpherson called the principle of possessive individualism)

[...]

The man of the first modernity, as citizen in power, thus has a double possibility in relation to social norms: a subjective possibility based on interiority and the internalization of the law within self-consciousness, and an objective possibility based on utilitarianism and the observance of rules and conventions. These are indeed two ways of articulating the individual and society, perceived as antithetical from the Enlightenment up to our own day (2014 pp. 108-109).

From that point of reference, citizenship is an idea recalling in practice and signaling, in theory, the contradictions of modernity. The ideals, principles, political institutions, and social values shaping the world for the last two centuries are portrayed in the variations of the idea of citizenship. As mentioned, Balibar (2014) has remarkably called this problematic nature the aporias of citizenship under his analysis of political modernity in terms of the paradoxical principle of the *Equaliberty*. This implies a contradictory nature of modern citizenship, implying that citizenship is a promise and, at the same time, a dismissal of modern society; it is an ideal and a reality, sometimes portrayed as a guarantee, and, in other cases, citizenship is a cause of vulnerability operated by invisible exclusions. As well, citizenship can prescribe principles of freedom, but constrains for action; and it can be contradictory by part of particular implications when it is ascribed to the individual character of a subject or her social identity. By expressing and concentrating those contradictions, citizenship is itself a nodal point capturing the problems of modern society. More precisely, the effects of the ontological constructions of politics in European modernity, in accordance with the foundational political ideas of the subject (in the Rousseauian sense) and the individuum (in the Lockean sense) shape the principle of modern political autonomy. Therefore, this is why citizenship can no longer be thought of in purely normative terms or in restrictive rationalistic ways, as it was performed in the *iusnaturalistic* constructions of political modernity. Indeed, citizenship can be enquired by the social effects of those foundational discourses, by the political institutions legitimated, and the discourses of justifications spread around the world as part of normative and rational constructions of modernity. As such, the question of politics guiding the idea of citizenship postulated here in accordance with the neglect or possibilities of an emancipatory politicization of the social

world attends to the contradictions overlying social practices of identification of the self, intersubjective interaction, and codification of human nature.

At the level of legal and political theory, the contradictions of citizenship are established under unilateral interpretations of the formula *freedom-equality* in the contradictory tensions between, on the one side, the universalization, institutionalization, conservation, and inclusion of a category of human rights, a form of democracy, a type of constitution, and, a representation of the people; and, on the other side, the particularity, unorganized, subversion, and exclusion of contrasting images of the human condition, political practices, forms of social life, and plural subjectivities. The current popular conceptions of citizenship inspired by contemporary liberalism, neo-republicanism, and communitarianism, along with the sociological approaches dealing with the problems of contemporary societies, with only a few critical exceptions also limited by the scope of their critical insights in practice⁴¹, kept unaffected the regime of the forms of power and cultural hegemony supporting the governmentality of the social relations regulated by the form State/Capitalism, they also sometimes accept the validity of social institutions securing domination, and occasionally those theories remain trapped in defense of particularities that exclude radical and liberatory political claims. Balibar, then, rightly upholds the necessity to keep open tension, paying close attention to the insurrectional movements that revitalize the grammars of rights, claim for more democracy, reformulate the legal principles of property, security, and publicness, and negate the exclusion of certain social groups.

The second moment of modern citizenship within the facticity of social conflicts

That raises the necessary component of conflicts as an inherent part of the modern idea of citizenship beyond the idealizations of participation found in different political theories and administrative mechanisms of political legitimation. Hence, the instability of the modern idea of citizenship, caused by the historical contradictions in which it is inscribed, implicates not only the impossibility of being founded on a certain grammar of rights but also its entire assimilation to the movements, claims and disputes steered by the socio-historical

⁴¹ See the case of *differentiated citizenship* by Iris Marion Young presented in the first chapter.

organization of a form of life. For the modern idea of citizenship, this implies its direct and total dependence on the social and the differentiation, complexity, and fragmentation it includes. Accordingly, the structural contradictions of the modern society that originally propelled the unsteadiness of our current ideas of citizenship are subjected to a *second moment* featured by unavoidable situatedness, immanence, and divergence of the practical exercise of political autonomy in a variety of socio-historical forms. In this new horizon mediated by the structural social transformations produced by the instauration of *State-managed capitalism*, citizenship goes beyond its pure normative formulations to be counted as a dialectical concept that reflects the dynamism and complexity of the practical realms of socio-institutional life in which power performs.

In that sense, the autonomy fulfilling the content of modern citizenship must be presupposed, as Habermas (1996) remarkably claims, as a ready-made available basis, a source of validity of the social world in both the political-institutionalized dimension and the practical-political realm of society. At a conceptual level, that implicates the *co-originality* of the normative sources that inspire the modern idea of citizenship standing over autonomy: the *liberal tradition* defending *private autonomy* by virtue of *individual rights* and the *republican tradition* interpreting the side of *public autonomy* throughout *popular sovereignty*. The historical and logical co-originality that Habermas remarkably disclosed for the modern normative sources of autonomy indorses a displacement into the social world of the idea of citizenship. Now, citizenship becomes accessible from a perspective that acknowledges the “public forms of civil society [...] as well as in the forms of communication within a political public sphere” (1992, p. 82). Therefore, the political autonomy of subjects becomes increasingly attained *within* the instability of contexts of social interactions revealed in the form of the ever presence of conflicts and moral demands steered by the complexity of the contemporary society. Accordingly, a new reconstruction linked to its second moment of realization is also possible on the premises of co-originality that affirms a new socio-historical reality for the idea of citizenship.

[...] internal connection between popular sovereignty and human rights lies in the normative content of the very *mode exercise political autonomy*, a mode that is

not secured simply through the grammatical form of general laws but only through the communicative forms of discursive processes of opinion- and will-formation (Habermas 1996 p. 103)

The scope of citizens' public autonomy is not restricted by natural or moral rights just wanting to be put into effect, nor is the individual's private autonomy merely instrumentalized for the purposes of popular sovereignty. Nothing is given prior to the citizen's practice of self-determination [...] (Habermas 1996 p. 128).

Assuming the co-originality of the normative sources of freedom, an idea of citizenship clarified throughout those lenses becomes part of a new scenario of social reproduction that considers the institutionalized dimension of modern life. Societies in which social conflicts take place by actors seeking to guarantee their moral claims on inclusion, redistribution, and recognition through the means of modern law testify the processes of realization of the political autonomy implicated in the idea of citizenship within the interplay of social dynamics steered, on the one hand, by the logics of the *systemic organization* carried out by the capitalist market and the administered-technocratic power, and, on the other hand, by the needs of a *lifeworld* that stands in as the background of societal existence and upholds personal identities, cultural frames, and modes of social relations (Habermas 1985). In the web of such a schema of social reproduction, citizenship is entangled with the risks of the production of social crises and the moral expectations of practical subjects. Experiences linked to the participation in social contexts symbolically mediated and shaped by the institutionalized social order of the historical form of capitalism -as Nancy Fraser (2018) indicates-, lead to an image concerning the exercise of the political autonomy of subjects as attempts to produce enough power to counterbalance the effects of such an institutionalized capitalist social order in daily life.

Therefore, our current idea of citizenship can be seen as tied to the advanced version of the modern capitalist society in which the gradual tendencies towards State-managed capitalism steered new social conflicts by deflating the nineteenth-century contradiction between labor and capital. As a consequence of the political interventions in the economy by States that simultaneously assures profitability for private interests and guarantees social

rights for certain common concerns, social relations get denser and more dynamic. Therefore, new forms of social friction are driven by the displacement caused by the front presence of the state in different areas of social life and the effects of markets amplifying sources of profitability after the relief from the crises that state support to control.

The increasing interdependence of the state and the market and the entanglements of the mediums of power and money in the advancement of capitalism drive a multicentered and permanent process of *colonization of the lifeworld* that heightens instability, crises, and potentialities of conflicts. The different spheres of personality, culture, and modes of interactions move from the imposed rigidity of naturalized traditions, and, at the same time, personal identities, moral values, and modes of recognition become problematized in daily life as social norms that need to be double-checked. Accordingly, any idea of citizenship implicating at minimum a form of interaction between subjects in which something to be judged as political is at stake is always circumscribed to such a social lifeworld “constituted from a network of communicative actions that branch out through social space and historical time, and these live off resources of cultural traditions and legitimate orders no less than they depend on the identities of socialized individuals” (Habermas, 1996, p. 80). The sociological view that supports such a fundamental presupposition for grasping the modern idea of citizenship adverts theoretical approaches to examine the socio-historical dynamics steering crisis and conflicts under a double perspective that moves at the level of institutional or systemic operation and at the level of practical exchanges of daily life. Thus, the ever-common crises and the frequent conflicts promote a less concrete vision of the functioning of society that could be estimated in general categories that totalize the social world and idealize the historical subject; but, moreover, that also means that normative potentialities of change can be affirmatively estimated in action coordinated by social movements.

The second moment of modern citizenship contended in the New Social Movements

Social dynamism and the proliferation of social conflicts related to the appearance of the *New Social Movements* in the twentieth century illuminate a situation for the theoretical discourse of citizenship that only until recently has been recognized as a core unit of the political nature, reach, and impact of collective action. Clearly demarcated by the ways by

which the figure of citizenship directly connects with the idea of autonomy that appeared as a consequence of the modern principle of subjectivity, citizenship is the prior condition of possibility to develop the collective interests that promote social movements in the informal spaces of civil society, and, citizenship is also the normative grammars at which any possible outcome can aim in order to warrant the achievements of the disagreements proposed in social conflicts.

As long as social movements employed strategies in two constituted levels of social dynamism (in the systems and in the lifeworld), as Arato y Cohen (2014) remarkably disclosed, those collective groups follow a pattern of Late Capitalism discovered by Habermas by virtue of his examination of the context of *Welfare State*: “the establishment of basic political rights in the framework of mass democracy means, on the one hand, a universalization of the role of citizen and, on the other hand, a segmenting of this role from the decision-making process” (1985 p. 350). Universalization and segmentation neither indicate an abstract nor a normative consideration of citizenship status, but that means an immanent logic that functions at the institutional level of society and in practical daily life. As a consequence, the implications are paradoxical since the power carried out by the given socio-historical forms of the institutions -systemic reproduction in Habermas sense- and the type interactions -social reproduction in Habermas sense- neutralizes and limits the powers that could be derived directly from an ideal of democratic participation and political legitimacy produced by citizens. Social movements, therefore, arose in Late Capitalism as an answer to the “cleansing of political participation from any participatory content” (Habermas 1985 p. 350) with the capacity to produce disagreements that confront such a depoliticizing tendency of citizenship in late capitalism by means of different types of collective action.

Social movements are, thus, indicative of a second moment present in the evolution of the modern idea of citizenship inasmuch that their historical appearance is backed by the re-emergence of civil society, steered by crises of social reproduction and the related potential of protest that lies in social conflicts, in which the participatory role of citizenship in the legitimization of social powers was neutralized by the interventions of the state in the economy and the emergence of technocratic means of government. Correspondingly, the

emergence of social movements and their protracted relevance until today reveal the problems overlying the idea of citizenship. The connection between the notions of citizenship and social movements is paradoxical because the contingency and heterogeneity of the collective action characterizing social movements serve to the development of disagreements that disclose potential paths of political participation and power legitimation, but, at the same time, social movements perform such task without a normative guidance that could support them programmatically and warrant the results of their struggles. Assuming that such a lack of normative structuration is part of the limits imposed by the form and organization of late capitalism, contingency, and dispersion are not inherent ontological traits of contemporary social mobilizations. This is a status given by the differentiation and fragmentation steered by Late Capitalism at the institutional level and daily interaction realm of contemporary society that obfuscates coordination in action plans and distorts common grounded interactions among the citizens that take part in mobilizations.

There is no doubt that social movements have been characteristic of the movements - in the Polanyian sense- produced in modern society as a consequence of the tendencies towards marketization of life and the struggles to safeguard certain goods dialectically disclosed, disenchanting, and destabilized by the rationalization of the lifeworld in capitalist modernity. However, as Nancy Fraser (2013) has remarkably observed, their emancipatory reach has always been at odds due to the always difficult burdens of placing themselves in the boundaries of the contradictions of society and the real-life pressures for enduring themselves in front of the opposing social powers. Then, the condition of the political movements that appeared within the complexity of the dynamics of society reveals both the highly conflictual contexts of social life and the problematic immanency to which any opposition to the powers of the lifeworld is subjected. Such a condition, nevertheless, suggests a point of departure for both the critical analysis of the socio-historical structures to which political action is inscribed and the clarification of the practical-political implications of the contexts of crises, conflicts, and problems involved in the reaction performed in the movements of society.

The real theoretical problem of contemporary politics is, in that sense, neither a plausible analytics of the action, resources, and opportunities that trigger protests and mobilizations nor that is the establishment of a far-reaching observer explanation of the logic of the emergence of conflicts in the middle of unattainable discrepancies between discursive structures of societies and subjects. However, the real problem is how to elaborate on a normative standard of politics that confronts the social powers that, at a generalized scale, induce social injustice and, at a concrete level, impose empirical blockages to the transformation of those conditions without losing, at the same time that both levels are grasped, practical and socio-historical awareness of the problems. Hence, a critical theoretical understanding of social conflicts and politics is essential since socio-theoretical approaches that ontologize the given characteristics of social movements and descriptive models of action, resources and opportunities dismiss or avoid the elaboration on political normativity that could be inspired by the critical tradition of modern philosophy that evolved on the premises of freedom and equality.

Reinstating the normativity of citizenship politics

As understood here, the latter is what the idea of modern citizenship aims to inspire by virtue of a historical reconstruction that shows its validity as a central political concept and indicates the capacity of subjects to politicize their social world in accordance with the socio-historical evolution of modernity that is gradually incorporated to the dynamism, complexity and problematization of social relations. Then, the importance of social movements for an account of reflective citizenship politics is: first, that they advise about the conditions of immanency and social unrest under which contemporary political normativity must be assumed, and second, that they inform a normative perspective to pay attention to the limits within which social movements could operate. The possibilities of an account of critical politics that assumes a sense of balance between immanence and transcendence rest on the elaboration of normative reconstruction of citizenship that, following Jürgen Habermas, identifies the content of contemporary citizenship with the exercise of the political autonomy in social contexts symbolically mediated. That indicates that citizenship can be seen as the exercise of such autonomy by members seeking to recognize each other as a

legitimate form of life within sociohistorical contexts overburdened by complexity and limitations caused by functional imperatives. In accordance with this hypothesis, the contemporary account of citizenship overflows the boundaries of social movements theory and practice by the inherent normativity linked to the political autonomy ascribed to all humans in processes of communicative deliberation that meet halfway -as Habermas says- the institutionalized and symbolically structured lifeworld. The social movement's perspectives of the modern social world and the contemporary social conflicts are, therefore, overflowed by a coherent critical account of citizenship that understands, first, in weak, pragmatism and contextual terms, the transcendence power inherent to the dialogical and intersubjective means provided by the communicative competence of human beings, and, second, recognize that social interactions are dependent on the given socio-historical forms of life, ethical values and interests.

That perspective is, therefore, important since the political normativity that could be grasped in a reconstruction of citizenship as political autonomy has been stocked for a very long time in the apparent contrast between the paradigms of disagreement and consensus in political theory. By commonly opposing the description of given socio-historical features of contemporary social movements, such as plurality, heterogeneity, and contingency to the reconstructive arguments that validate the normativity inscribed in the contemporary forms of life that allow social conflicts to flourish, there has been installed an apparent irreconciliation between the discourse of social movements and the theory of citizenship. The defensive attitude of Mouffe's agonistic politics, Laclau's analysis of the production of political demands, and even in the political model of pure immanence of Negri and Hardt has produced a gap between the social analysis of radical political action and rational theorization of the normativity of politics. But there is no reason to be entirely rendered to the elaborated descriptions on the indecisiveness and contingency that characterize the paradigm of radical democratic politics and give all the merit of transformative politics to the perspectives based on willful and abstract oppositions supported by the premises of the philosophical ontology of *difference*.

There is no doubt that departing from distinctions about the social world that evoke unsurmountable instability, inadequacy, and uncertainty immediately advantages a progressist view of social transformation. Differences at hand such as the following guarantee the accuracy of a critical attitude as an observer of the given sociohistorical world: “the social” and “the political”, between the realms of institutional politics and the informal-political, between types of political claims such as the “popular demands” and the “democratic demands”, and between categorical oppositions such as the politics of the agents who “take part” in the organized domains of power against the vagueness of those who do not take part; but, nevertheless, following the premises of philosophical *difference* for examining the mobilizing social agency defended by contemporary political theorists such as Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe or even Jacques Ranciere there cannot be guidance for the practical-political subjects. They offer a clear understanding concerning the relevance of dissenting in politics and prevent the risks of overlooking it in normative political theory. However, it is also generally and commonly recognizable in their ideas that the envisioning of possibilities for setting a normative content of what the experience of practical subjects - that in this case could be assimilated to the participant position of the citizen- entails an excessive rationalization of the constitutive difference present in the realm of politics. Their view on politics commonly implicates an undefined gap between the socio-historical structures of social life and the situation of the subjects that is impossible to be theoretically graspable and that is only contingently apprehended as unfounded empirical confrontations.

By offering an active and suggestive -albeit abstract- model of radical democracy, contemporary political theories that defend suitable models of pure immanence, radical agonism, and impossible heterogeneity of political action linked to the logic of contemporary social movements lessen the normative scope of the idea of citizenship that could be reconstructed in critical-theoretical terms. The ontological presuppositions from which the political interactions of social movements are grasped make it difficult to connect directly with citizens' expectations. Thus, it is problematic that political action could not be more than a means for an endless contestation in which experiences of injustice or indignation cannot be a source of any rational motivation. These paradigmatic trends inspiring the assessment

of social movements nowadays have moved away from a dialectics of context-dependence and context-transcendence that rules practical human action. Thereupon, tension is expressed in the social discourse of social movements and the classical normativity of the theory of citizenship that affects the current understanding of critical politics. This must be faced without overlooking the warning lights of social immanence developed by authors such as the mentioned and the illuminating lights of normative transcendence safeguarded in the weak, situated, and pragmatic models of communicative rationality⁴².

Citizenship in the contemporary social dynamics of recognition and redistribution

A different story for the current evolutionary trends of the second moment of the idea of citizenship starts directly from the *social dynamics* that characterize contemporary critical politics under the premises of *recognition* and *redistribution*, as Nancy Fraser (2002) paradigmatically claimed. In a sense, Fraser's famous contribution to the debate of social justice, carried out two decades ago as the normative horizon of contemporary politics implicated an impressive critical reformulation of social and political theory wfields Fraser assumed a project of a double rational critique to produce a synthesis of the practical and theoretical agenda of transforming politics.

At one level of her critical examination, she proposed a reconstruction of the social practices performed by social movements questioning the relations of subordination in the historical context in which identities were problematized and became part of the political agenda of different minority groups claiming for inclusion in different social spaces. Remarkably, Fraser discloses that in contemporary critical terms, conflicts steered by the struggles of different groups reflected the compatibility of both political claims based on *class* experiences of domination and sufferers of *status* oppression. Accordingly, she saw the critical-normative renovation of social and political theory on appreciating the struggles of subordinated social groups as claims over *egalitarian participation* in the spaces of social reproduction of practical life. Therefore, Economic and cultural struggles need to be

⁴² This takes the two main parts of my arguments at the end of chapter II and IV. Here my aim is to show how there can be a sociocritical path -not a reconstructive-normative one- to get to the point of reformulation of the idea of citizenship that is linked to the contemporary issues of transformative politics.

appreciated and examined as constitutive elements of the emergence and performance of the transformative agendas of social movements. At the same time, both economic and cultural issues involved or lacking in the agendas of social movements are normative standards to assess the radical-egalitarian scope of their struggles.

At the other level, Fraser illuminates the two main theoretical traditions reflecting on the institutional design of social justice in the contemporary world. Validating the existence of a new post-socialist historical context that lessens the influence of liberal and socialist ideals on the normative structures of contemporary society, she deflates the egalitarian content of the arguments on the reformation of the basic structure of society defended by political liberalism and on the transformation of the structure of capitalist economy displayed by socialist thinkers to inscribe such claims in the collective mindsets of social movements. Accordingly, Fraser attests to a sedimentation of the egalitarian content of political liberalism and socialism, detranscendentalizing their normative standards. Hence, struggles for recognition and redistribution are the intrinsic reasons linked to the instability of contemporary social dynamics that trigger the conflicts proposed by social movements. Critical normativity also reformulates social and political theory terms through a perspective grounded on the *egalitarian structuration* of social institutions that guarantees economic and cultural parity.

The formulation of the double schema of recognition and redistribution signaling the political struggles of social movements since the end of the twentieth century provides a well-sustained basis for the idea of citizenship immersed in such a moment. Fraser clarifies the path for the renovation of critical understanding of the idea beyond the classical discourses of citizenship and grants its examination in contemporary times to the practices of social struggles and the dynamics of social injustice. Moreover, Fraser instructs about the renovation of normative inquiry concerning citizenship content by illuminating how the normativity of political ideas can be situated in and connected with social practices and dynamics⁴³. From this point of view, citizenship could be questioned as an idea susceptible

⁴³ To do this with the idea of citizenship correspond to the task of the last part of chapter II.

to a renovation departing from the contemporary historicity of plural social conflicts and unstable socio-institutional dynamics.

In this era of coupling struggles on recognition and redistribution, new legal and political arrangements were set in the global north by the agendas of feminism, environmental, and multicultural movements. And wherein these agendas included a radical reformism that included both the production of new legal provisions within the political system and active mobilization aiming to create new forms of sensitive awareness concerning the historical and systematic injustice suffered by women, environment and cultural minorities, new forms of sociability were also opened up. Sociologically speaking, the idea(s) of citizenship showed historical redefinitions by the institutional and social settlements propelled by those issues. The social linkage dimension within the idea of citizenship disclosed postwar European Welfare State⁴⁴ was redefined by the conflictual dynamics of claims attached to gendered equality, environmental responsibility and cultural inclusion that achieved institutionalization. As part of those new dynamics of sociability, citizenship distinctively became conceptually integrated into the non-institutional practices and discourses of daily life, despite that the State mediated such tendencies through its social policies, promoting programs and direct regulations.

Nevertheless, that historical determination and situatedness of citizenship in the contemporary sociopolitical dynamics linked to the ideals of equality also implicated a cunning of history rooted in the neoliberal regime of historical capitalism. As Nancy Fraser (2009) also remarks for the case of second-wave feminism, “the cultural changes jump-started [...] have served to legitimate a structural transformation of capitalist society that runs directly counter to [...] visions of a just society” (p. 99). Despite the claims for social justice, struggles were carried out by a high degree of fragmentation and compartmentalization of the economic, cultural, and political issues. That supported selective institutional-state incorporation and partial-social acceptance, and, also, separation “from the societal critique that had integrated them [...] hopes were conscripted in the service of a project that was deeply at odds with our larger, holistic vision of a just society” (p. 99). From this, Fraser

⁴⁴ See Marshall (1990), Giddens (1985), Turner (1990), Mann (1987).

concludes: “In a fine instance of the cunning of history, utopian desires found a second life as feeling currents that legitimated the transition to a new form of capitalism: post-Fordism, transnational, neoliberal” (p. 99).

Undoubtedly, that confirms the inherent normative ambiguity of social movements that have been proven after a current decade of right-wing reactionary mobilization across the world. Their countercultural agendas are not exempted from mass cultural and social modernity logic. In what concerns the destiny of social movements at the end of the twentieth century, Fraser’s analysis of paradoxical neoliberal social movements reveals similar delusional findings that one can read in radical democratic theorists. This is so clearly for different reasons, but, in any case, there is a lack of straight normativity in social movements reflection that contrasts with the implicated normativity classically ascribed to citizenship that could help to maintain the opportunities of emancipatory politics under rational and radical grounds.

The citizen-subject of constitutions and insurrections

By the times of dissemination and capturing of social movements that arose in the intersection of the period of change between State-managed capitalism and financialized capitalism, the boundaries characterizing the modern idea of citizenship were displaced to maintain its normative and descriptive potentialities, as Balibar (2015) remarkably argued, as practices of new citizens-subjects of sociopolitical insurrections and institutional constitutions. The twenty-first century's first two decades have been characterized by a period of social crisis and disorganized politics, both institutional and non-institutional. New authoritarian right-wing leaders have arisen, as if it were an announcement for the politics of real transformation that there cannot be authority orienting the radical democratic struggles for the new upcoming times; but, at the same time, new conflictual boundaries have arisen around themes and places that were not previously appreciate from the perspectives of European emancipatory critical theory and global north radical transforming practices, the agendas of subaltern subjects such as the migrants, racialized persons, and ethnic communities gradually coming to the surface of the global society from the peripheries of liberal-constitutional regimes. Hence, on the other side of the wave of authoritarian

leadership, there has emerged a new normative ideal concerning the necessity of *democratizing democracy*, in which freedom and equality are captured at once in new places, agendas and subjects following the singularities of their experiences.

As commonly excluded subjects from the direct dynamics of social production and practices of cultural reproduction indicted from the basis of Western organizational principles of the capitalist and the rule of law and the hegemony of group social incarnating their suitable values, the politics of the excluded portray *dispersed* forms of articulation and organization from the perspective of the traditional imaginaries of political struggles mediated by the class conflict ideal, but, from the outskirts of this world, in which the experiences of marginalized groups are allocated, their constitution is produced as an intensified *commonality* of the plurality of the worlds excluded from -as Arturo Escobar (2016) says- the one-singular world of modern-capitalism.

Étienne Balibar (2017) has masterfully captured the horizon of citizenship politics after the agitating fever of positiveness dispensed by social movements several decades ago. He asks: “What comes after the subject?” and, he answers, moving away from the metaphysics of the subject, correcting messianism, and restoring the dialectics of power constitution: “The citizen”. Now, Balibar says, what appeared as an indeterminacy in ancient politics following the *arché* as a moment of possibility -a possibility of politicization through participation, I have claimed-, in our times appears as the possibility of realization of equality after the generalized struggles for freedom in the European modernity, that is a possibility of realizing the equal right to the social spaces, knowledges and practices. This normativity comes from a distinct subject, the one claiming participation and decision from very far away boundaries of epistemological, anthropological and ontological constitutions of Western civilizations and such a normativity is performed as insurrections of such an ordering.

Balibar signals the logic of a renovated idea of citizenship in which both its historical political content is outstandingly recognized and actualized in accordance with the times at stake, and, at the same time, in his masterfully philosophical interpretations, the normativity of the concept is nurtured and enhanced paying attention to the current political struggles. An accurate Marxist understanding of history upholds the evolutionary trends of the idea up

to our times to illuminate the emancipatory content of citizenship on the claims for economic, cultural and political equality to be instituted in new values, social institutions -as schools- and the representative offices of the state, as a form of radical transformation that could be reflected altogether in the situation of migrants in Europe. With notable historical-practical senses, situates the *otherness* in position to bring the emancipatory changes into being in the forms of the non-codified and excluded particularities in the concept of citizenship by race blindness, gender ignoring, and ethnic invisibility. By means of the non-conceptualized, we see in the dialectics of insurrection and constitution the realizations of citizenship straightly seen as the political struggle for equality that produces new dimensions of subjective sociability. Balibar's *citizen-subject* aims beyond the source of politics coming from the social movements of the late twentieth-century global north history. In both theory and practice, contemporary politics calls for a displacement of the subjective images under it, which are figured, and the objective pictures over it, which are thought.

The new axis of regulation and emancipation of contemporary citizenship

In accordance with that challenge Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007; 2014; 2020) developed his theoretical enterprise several years ago, acknowledging that democracy could be democratized from the practices and experiences of marginalized social groups in the global south. More than a decade ago, Santos proposed to analyze the struggles stemming from the experiences of Latin American social movements under a comprehensive view that claimed to appreciate the existence of alternative institutions of regulation of life such as autonomous regulations of the communities, cooperative locally based economies, promotion of idiosyncratic traditions, on the one hand; and, he also claimed to value the alternative practices of emancipation promoted by ancestral knowledge, eco and biocentric ethics, and animistic senses of aesthetic representation. Based on a postcolonial critique and empirically based research experiences, Santos sought to claim validity for a socio-critical approach to the Latin American social movements that, under his terms, could offer answers for the excesses and insufficiencies of the “modern paradigm” that he qualifies as revolutionary promising, but unequally balanced among and in between its principles of regulation and emancipation of social life.

As a response, Santos seeks the validation of a sociological paradigm that he calls the sociology of the absences and emergencies around the axis of regulation and emancipation. His idea is, then, to give attention to the ethnic-based and original communities in Latin America with a social-political movement agenda that defend their self-sufficient government, own property on land, and autonomous cultural traditions against the military-based powers of the postcolonial Latin American states, the extractivist form neoliberal capitalist entrenched that promotes expropriation of land in the global south, and the epistemic genocide ongoing since the Spanish conquest up today in different forms of cultural discrimination driven by the coloniality of knowledge. Accordingly, following Boaventura de Sousa Santos, a new social global world is yet to arise within the scope of several encounters and discounters that could happen around the axis of regulation and emancipation at the moments when Latin American social movements challenge the application of the modern institutions of the State, Market, and Community, and the premises of scientific rationality, moral universality, and expressivist aesthetics to their forms life.

Santos's general sociopolitical perspective of the Latin America context gains theoretical accuracy and practical precision when viewed as a source of the current critical politics of citizenship. In this fashion, the conflicts around the axis of regulation and emancipation reinvigorated the displaced notion of citizenship secured in Balibar's recent work and appeared after the political-interpretative paradigm of European social movements. As a form of sociologically based view of the logics of insurrection and constitution characterizing the current radical production of citizenship, Santos's Latin American-inspired perspective sets the practical contours of the boundary conflicts carried out as emancipatory struggles for freedom and equality at the institutional level of society and at the level of cultural reproduction. Moreover, as a source of critical view of the politics of citizenship, the axis of regulation of emancipation developed by Santos following the Latin American sociopolitical context supports a promising historicization of citizenship in accordance with the modeling regime of blockages and eroding instating by neoliberal capitalism. Therefore, the production of emancipatory citizenship following the Latin America context claims attention around a new methodological axis informing about its

current boundary struggles and warns about the historical context in which the realizations of its normative content must be critically analyzed.

The politics of citizenship in the Latin American recent context

The codification of boundary struggles in a broad sense that includes economic, political, and cultural conflicts under the word *citizenship* is not something new in Latin America, as the systematic works carried out for two decades by prominent authors in the field, such as Evelina Dagnino, Sonia Alvarez, Arturo Escobar, Alvaro García Linera and Adolfo Chaparro show.

Increasingly adopted since the late 1980s and 1990s by Latin American popular movements, excluded sectors, trade unions, and left parties as a central element of their political strategies, the notion of citizenship has become a common reference among social movements such as those of women, blacks and ethnic minorities, homosexuals, retired and senior citizens, consumers, environmentalists, urban and rural workers, and groups organized around urban issues such as housing, health, education, unemployment, and violence. These movements have found reference to citizenship a useful tool for their particular struggles and a powerful articulating link among them. The general demand for equal rights embedded in the predominant conception of citizenship has been extended and specified in accordance with the demands in question. In this process of redefinition, a strong emphasis has been placed on citizenship's cultural dimension, incorporating contemporary concerns with subjectivities, identities, and the right to difference (Dagnino 2003 p. 3).

Accordingly, the redefinition of the idea of citizenship beyond the classical European sources of politics has been going on for a long time in Latin America. Such a redefinition is part of a history that can be followed in the double perspective of the transformations at the level of the institutions of the State and the Market have had since the independence of the Latin American countries in the nineteenth century and at the level of the processes of social reproduction. However, that history is full of internal contradictions, ambiguous developments and even paradoxical results at each level. The genuine Latin American

politics of citizenship discloses amorphous processes of liberal State building and presence, unstructured formation of capitalist markets and limited industrialization, unequally and stratified practices sociability with different forms of social authoritarianism linked to the exclusion of population from social institutions and common goods, and discrimination of different forms of cultural existence, political demands, and economic alternatives. Thus, emancipatory claims have found a basis to claim for both the institutional recognition of rights and the protection of the persistent differences in the broad and adaptative meaning of citizenship. As Dagnino explains:

A substantial part of the attraction of citizenship and its core category of rights lies in the dual role it has been able to play in the debate among the various conceptions of democracy that characterize the contemporary political struggle in Latin America. On the one hand, the struggle organized around the recognition and extension of rights has helped to make the argument for the expansion and deepening of democracy much more concrete. On the other hand, the reference to citizenship has provided common ground and an articulatory principle for an immense diversity of social movements that have adopted the language of rights to express their demands that helped them escape fragmentation and isolation (Dagnino 2003 p. 4).

The particularities of the politics of citizenship developed in Latin America lie in the coupling of both the institutional and the practical dimensions of social life in conflicts that confront material claims usually tied to the substantiality of a collective, communitarian and traditional form of life to the ambiguous structure of a society that performs as a seemingly legible rational form and pseudo universality content through its political system. Remarkably, the politics of citizenship in Latin America in such a radical sense mediated by the opportunities that the variabilities of the political-economical regimes in its own internal contradictions allowed is sometimes promoted as a radical transformative claim for common good. It has allowed outstanding achievement of legal-constitutional warrants and social recognition of different forms of citizenship, such as the ones derived from the status of ecological activists, indigenous populations, Afro minorities, victims of internal armed conflicts, victimized women by patriarchal violence. Among many others, these forms of

Latin American citizenship politics combined a struggle against class and cultural subordination with the legal and social grammars of rights that inspire radical transformations.

But, at the same time, the other way around, substantial claims supporting the Latin American politics of citizenship allow fragility and diffusion in its unarticulated pluralism, radical heterogeneity, and ontological dissent, which is sometimes an advantage for their turning into individualized, compartmentalized, and fragmented claims by the dependent political-economical regimes in the global world-system. Commonly employing the grammar of liberal and republican rights in ambiguously adaptable ways, radical claims are filtered and turned into non-emancipatory interests that could receive specific public provisions and partial recognition. This has remarkably happened in the times of neoliberal regimes with different forms of suitable advantages that give support to the people's claims over labor opportunities, health services, educational facilities, ecological measures, housing provisions, and agricultural subsidiaries only if workers, attendants, students, social leaders, family holders, and peasants present themselves as individuals, entrepreneurs, experts and investors willing to canalize their interests through the social policy programs in which public resources are managed by private enterprises such as banks, foreign and national companies and NGO's.

In straightforward terms, such dialectics of the Latin American forms of citizenship politics operate as no other case the displacement of the inner logic of contradictions and boundary struggles of the idea of citizenship occurred in the last decades. Evidently, Latin American citizenship displays in blatant ways that the production of subjective sociability is embedded in processes of political making and recognition of rights. Moreover, the Latin American context asserts that the contemporary politics of citizenship moves around the axis of regulation and emancipation that amalgamates political-economical struggles and socio-cultural conflicts. However, it is also remarkable that, in recent history, the full range of forms of citizenship politics have been recognized and guaranteed under the influence of neoliberal capitalism. The rights achieved and influential struggles performed have occurred in the times and the places in which neoliberal policies were tested to be enhanced as a

modeling case for state management, defended to be claimed as a paradigm of economic development, and reinforced to be sustained as legitimate for the people. As Dagnino sustains, Latin American

attempts to reconfigure civil society and to redefine participation are intimately connected with emerging notions of neoliberal citizenship. Their aim seems to be the depoliticization of these two notions, which have been central references in the democratizing struggle for the extension of citizenship. This depoliticization represents a counteroffensive to the advances in the redefinition of the political arena that have derived from that struggle (Dagnino 2003 p. 4).

Neoliberalism has blocked the universalizing possibilities of the politics of citizenship towards a new common social structure, undermined the articulation of cultural pluralities, and diminished the internal configurations of identities as democratic demands and solidarities while abiding military dictatorships, institutional coups, ecological destruction, and extreme inequality. Recently, neoliberalism has dismantled classical forms of labor struggles by leaving unregulated technological platforms to operate with precarizing conditions for the workers and it has also promoted authoritarian leadership in government offices. Additionally, neoconservative social authoritarianism forces have intensified the advocacy against progressive agendas of the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ groups. Everything has happened in the context of the political-institutional weaknesses and civil society limitations in which the pressures of international debt, post-democratic lobbyism, and capitalist interests seeking the value of natural resources extraction conflates with structural inequalities, longstanding cultural discriminations and delegitimized political systems take place.

The remaining counterforces of citizenship politics after the pathological depoliticizing blockages of neoliberal capitalism in Latin America have survived in practices of persistence and resistance commonly allocated in social groups carrying out the most radical political and cultural differences. Indigenous populations such as the Movimiento Zapatista in México, the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca -CRIC-in Colombia, and the feminist movement “Ni una Menos” across the region could be seen as performing a radical

difference that maintains the emancipatory agenda characterizing the politics of citizenship in Latin America alive. That, however, -with the remarkable exception of “Ni una menos” in Argentina- place emancipatory politics caught in a defensive attitude, struggling to expand the power maintained in resistance. This resistance can be found as antistatic, anticapitalist, and antipatriarchal forces maintaining the field of radical struggles in which the production of political subjectivities steering social conflicts and the genesis of citizenship claiming for rights merge to keep opened and well-sustained the emancipatory ideals of freedom and equality included in the modern idea of citizenship. However, it is difficult to imagine the mediate future of such a field of struggles beyond the resistance model of political action that asserts the heterogeneity, plurality, and particularity of those social movements⁴⁵. For the case of the theory of citizenship, such implies the discouraging picture of a political practice that cannot achieve the supportive warrants, securing provisions, and normative recognition that the universal moral, political, and social grammars of rights could uphold, as it has been not only established in the European modernity but as it has been advantageous legible by the Latin American politics of citizenship for decades.

Towards a critical theory of citizenship politics

That problem calls for the aims and means of a critical theory of citizenship politics that sets in its tasks the clarification of the emancipatory scope of the movements taking place in the current society and avoids getting rid of normative standards for examining political practices. Accordingly, the problem disclosed in the context of Latin American citizenship politics as the tendency towards a pathological depoliticization inflicted by neoliberal capitalism to emancipatory claims across the world leads to the substantial analysis of this dissertation. It has been clear up to this point that there is a normative content retained in the grammar of citizenship politics that must be clarified in coherent, systematic terms in order to proceed to the critical examination of the pathology of depoliticization dramatically inflicted on emancipatory politics in the era of neoliberal-financialized capitalism. By means

⁴⁵ I mean by “resistance model” the important analytical developments carried out in the Latin American context by authors influenced mainly by Foucault, Deleuze and Guatari, and several forms of the philosophy of alterity, such as Castro-Gomez, Chaparro, Escobar, and García Linera, among others.

of such a normative reconstruction of the idea of citizenship suitable to contemporary times and the diagnosis of historical contradiction under the present form of capitalist accumulation, the assessment of the emancipatory movements linked to the politics of citizenship could be carried out within a paradigm of communication that aims to be compatible the main trends of the power of resistance to depoliticization with the force of the making of communicative power that aims to *repoliticization*. Accordingly, the aim of what follows is to secure a critical-normative perspective of the rights and conflicts defining the content of contemporary citizenship to reveal its historical context of blockages and propose a reflection that intends to clarify the current horizon of the politics of citizenship.

Chapter II - Rights and Conflicts: The Contemporary Theory of Citizenship as Political Autonomy

The historical evolution of the idea of citizenship continued under the era of the *Welfare State* and the mass democracies that expanded all around the world during the twentieth century with remarkable consequences⁴⁶. With the gradual tendency of the State to intervene in society⁴⁷ and the development of a public administration driven by experts and technics, the fundamental rights moved from being mere individual guarantees for securing a sphere for private autonomy to being *principles* incorporated into political constitutions aiming at the intervention of several societal realms. Rights shift from a negative function to a positive one. For the contemporary history of citizenship, this evolution in the rights discourse alters the political relationship between the citizen and the State (directly) and other institutions like the market (indirectly). By intervening in the spheres of life in which the citizen is raised, educated, and identified, the *Welfare State* redefines citizenship as the status of deserving the *entitlements* and *provisions* – as Dahrendorf (1988) argues- or the *allocative* and *integrative requirements* –as Turner (1997) says- that the State-manager of the capitalist economy provides in accordance with one's situation in society (worker, mother, student, and so on). However, despite commonly being labeled as a historical evolution signaled by the formal recognition of the State, the political autonomy of autonomy has been paradoxically diminished in that process. Indeed, the idea of citizenship was radically altered in the twentieth century, and it is a landmark of a political crisis that has achieved its most

⁴⁶ The socio-historical explanation of these changes are fully considered in Chapter 3. Here the focus is on what the historical context of contexts means for the theory of citizenship.

⁴⁷ The gradual interdependence of the State and society that characterizes the welfare states of the mass democracies is, of course, dialectical, as Habermas extensively explains with the structural change of the liberal society since the end of the nineteenth century: “Interventionism had its origin in the transfer onto a political level of such conflicts of interest as could no longer be settled within the private sphere alone. Consequently, in the long run state intervention in the sphere of society found its counterpart in the transfer of public functions to private corporate bodies. Likewise, the opposite process of a substitution of state authority by the power of society was connected to the extension of public over sectors of the private realm” (1991, p. 142).

disgraceful dimensions under neoliberalism. Puzzlingly, such a process began with reinforcing the link between legal rights and the status of citizenship -as mentioned-but the one between active political participation and citizenship was displaced. While the citizen increasingly recognized herself in the provisions and allocative requirements, at the same, those subjects identified themselves less as political beings capable of producing and asserting publicly an autonomous and self-determined will.

T.H. Marshall's *Citizenship and Social Class* remarkably stands for the evolutionary outcomes of the link -and deference- between the rights of citizenship and effective citizenship status. Partially, and not less important, Marshall's essay discloses that the dynamics of social conflict are intrinsically related to the status of citizenship recognized and therefore must be considered for an appropriate definition. For Marshall, the categories of *civil*, *political*, and *social rights* can be portrayed precisely in an evolutionary perspective in which civil rights belong to the eighteenth, the political to the nineteenth, and the social to the twentieth (p. 14). The civil rights of the first period were the classical liberal rights of freedom and property that secure the private autonomy of the subjects against interventions. The political rights of the second period corresponded to the right to participate in political elections. Social rights are "economic welfare and security" (p. 11) guarantees that provide a minimum wage and social security. This is a progression that has been possible because of the institutional and cultural development of the State in Western societies and due to the political mediation of the social struggles produced by the contradictory economic system. Following Marshall's account, citizenship has been the idea in which many social exclusions produced mainly regarding *class* encountered a progressive solution in the *Welfare State*. Marshall's main objective was to analyze the progressive inclusion of class-based marginalized groups into the distribution of the social goods produced by the national State. He uses the expression of "rights of citizenship" to argue how such inclusion has been provided by the evolution of the language of rights and the assurances offered by the State's intervention.

Currently, *Citizenship and Social Class* stands as an essential landmarks for a significant shift in the discourse of citizenship from the juridical model to the sociological

one. With the social approach inaugurated by Marshall, a tendency toward the conceptualization of social problems started to be empirically considered. In accordance with his sociological background and insights, Marshall's work provided the space for new approaches against the dominant liberal and legal-based discourses about citizenship favoring ecological concerns, cultural and gender-based injustices, and problematic questions regarding globalization, such as the status of refugees in national states. Hereupon, the blossom of compound notions adjectivizing the term citizenship, such as social, ecological, feminist, immigrational, subaltern, postcolonial, and so on, are the expression of the attention given to the problems of inclusion and integration after the Marshallian account and the stabilization of the meaning of citizenship in the formal language of rights. In this sense, as it shall be seen, contemporary discussions about the idea of citizenship are structured around descriptive and normative approaches on the basis of a dynamic sociological model of interactions between social actors mobilizing the boundaries of exclusion and inclusion. However, it cannot be forgotten that the regulatory frame of rights stands in the background of the inclusionary claims⁴⁸. The influence of the social model of the citizenship studies that emerged after Marshall's essay is built on the function of modern law and its capacity to reduce the complexity and exonerate from the burdens of legitimation of the claims of mobilized citizens seeking inclusion⁴⁹.

I. Beyond norms and nations. Departing from the contemporary social model of citizenship.

Detaching citizenship from ethnicity and nationality

Despite the recognition of the central conflictual basis that Marshall recognizes of in the idea of citizenship during the twentieth century, his account of citizenship also assumed

⁴⁸ The classical sociological approach in the field of citizenship to be found in authors such as Brian Turner and Jack Barbalet support this point, as it shall be seen in the last part of this section.

⁴⁹ See Habermas (1996, pp. 42-131) for a long argument of this type. And an explicit reference to the problem in Marshall and others, see pages 77-78.

and reinforced two classical institutions underlying the latent process of depoliticization of citizenship carried out by the modern political discourse of rights (both naturalistically and rationalistically asserted) and in its corresponding legal model: (i) the artificial idea of the national-state and (ii) the external administrative dispositions of the legal membership to it - *ius soli* and *ius sanguini*:-

Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed (Marshall 1990 p. 28-29).

In general, this definition expresses a model of citizenship determined by the narrative of the *nation* converted in a *prepolitical* principle to regulate the social and economic process of modernization throughout the presumed sovereignty of the State in modern times (Habermas, 1996). Accordingly, *national identity* developed into a common criterion to assimilate citizenship with membership to a State⁵⁰. Such an imaginary was based on the reference provided by the “descent, shared traditions, and common language” of the people located in a territory (Habermas, 1996, p. 495). Thus, the modern idea of nation is supported on the evocation of both a historical past and an *ethnos* and/or cultural homogeneity. As Wallerstein (1991) and Hobsbawm (2002) have said, the imaginary of the *nation* is commonly projected on an inconsistent logic that mistakenly assumes that nationality was

⁵⁰ “The history of the term “nation” reflects the historical genesis of the nation-state. For the Romans, *Natio* was the goddess of birth and origin. *Natio* refers, like *gens* and *populus* but unlike *civitas*, to peoples and tribes who were not yet organized in political associations; indeed, the Romans often used it to refer to “savage,” “barbaric,” or “pagan” peoples. In this classical usage, then, nations are communities of people of the same descent, who are integrated geographically, in the form of settlements or neighborhoods, and culturally by their common language, customs, and traditions, but who are not yet politically integrated through the organizational form of the state. This meaning of “nation” persisted through the Middle Ages and worked its way into the vernacular languages in the fifteenth century. Even Kant still wrote that “those inhabitants . . . which recognize themselves as being united into a civil whole through common descent, are called a nation (*gens*).” However, in the early-modern period a competing usage arose: the nation is the bearer of sovereignty. The estates represented the “nation” over against the “king.” Since the middle of the eighteenth century, these two meanings of “nation”—community of descent and “people of a state”—have intertwined. With the French Revolution, the “nation” became the source of state sovereignty [...] (Habermas, 1996, p. 494).

before the formation of the State as a political fact when in reality, the situation was the opposite. Despite this, the narrative of the nation as the bearer of the sovereignty power performed by the State became one of the most natural political definitions without requiring more than its affirmation. Several authors have unveiled the artificial notion of *nation* that derives from the idea of the national identity conditioning the status of citizenship in the last decades regarding the crisis of the national state⁵¹, the framework of globalization⁵² and the context of the postcolonial States⁵³.

Only if it is understood that *nation* is a *prepolitical principle* built on an ideological consciousness that has lost its material and historical basis, can citizenship be differentiated from the national identity to which it has been confined⁵⁴. In this sense, considering the idea of citizenship that can be historically placed since the revolutionary process in France, citizenship can no longer be assimilated to nationality or membership to a State considered as a legal and territorial entity, which represents the sovereign power of regulation for such conditions. With the *Revolution* and the *Declaration of the rights of Man and of the Citizen* a new horizon was opened to stop being a *subject (subditus)* to become a *citizen*, and to organize the social world not under dependency but over equality and freedom (*Egaliberté*) (Balibar 2015).

With Rousseau and Kant, citizenship began to be conceived under the shade of a democratic government that requires active and autonomous participation of the members of a political community capable of producing new bondages beyond the naturally inherited, such as nationality (Habermas, 1996). Thus, despite the “psychological dimension” (Carens, 2000) that nationality can provide to the citizenry, citizenship should not be reduced to national identity. As the concept of self-determination underlies the republican conception of citizenship indicates, the possibility of creating shared values and transforming them into

⁵¹ See, Sassen (2000) and Santos (1998).

⁵² See, Bosniak (2000)

⁵³ See, Comaroff (2007).

⁵⁴ “With the French Revolution, then, the meaning of “nation” was transformed from a prepolitical quantity into a constitutive feature of the political identity of the citizens of a democratic polity. At the end of the nineteenth century, the conditional relation between ascribed national identity and acquired democratic citizenship could even be reversed” (Habermas, 1996, p. 494).

self-given legislation can compensate and reframe national identity into popular sovereignty and cultural identification into a democratic mindset⁵⁵.

As Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1998) says, considering the idea of reframing the problem of national identity into a universal citizenship, there has always been a tension between subjectivity and citizenship for which the artificial dissolution in the idea of nationality has curtailed the possibility itself of a political idea of citizenship based on equal recognition: “[...] the equality of citizenship collides with the difference of subjectivity, the more so because in the frame of the liberal regulation such equality is deeply selective and leaves the differences untouched” (p. 292). On light of these considerations, the impositions given by the administrative criteria of *ius soli* and *ius sanguini* to regulate state membership must no longer be justified as valid groundings to define the rights of citizenship and the ethical status of citizenship. Those measures belong to a juridical model of citizenship that must be confronted in order to bring to light the innermost radical democratic content of citizenship deriving from a modern notion of political autonomy and to give support to the dynamics of conflict from which the rights of citizenship and the social recognition of the citizens flourish. Critiquing those juridical dispositives that serve today more to the control and limitation of the effective exercise and perform of citizenship is remarkable, considering the situation of immigrants and poverty, as many authors have claimed.

For those cases, and against the artificial notions and administrative criteria inherited from the liberal perspective and the juridical model of citizenship, the recent attention given to Hannah Arendt’s famous quote *the right to have rights* by different authors such as Balibar (2015) and Benhabib (2001) expresses the necessity of a new political definition of citizenship. This new account must reflect unmistakably the conflicts carried out as ethical-political claims and struggles for social recognition from which the status of citizenship stems from and the basis of mutual understanding that the rights of citizenship warrant.

⁵⁵ “However, this social-psychological connection does not mean that the two are linked at the conceptual level [...] national freedom does not coincide with the genuinely political freedom that citizens enjoy within a country. For this reason, the modern understanding of this republican freedom can, at a later point, cut its umbilical links to the womb of the national consciousness of freedom that originally gave it birth. The nation-state sustained a close connection between "demos" and "ethos" only briefly. Citizenship was never conceptually tied to national identity” (Habermas, 1996 p. 495). See also, Taylor (1989, pp. 178-179).

Participation in the dynamics of recognition that effectively displays the status of the citizen in social institutions and membership to the political community that reciprocally acknowledges the rights that all the members possess underly an account of citizenship that has been disclosed by the modern idea of political autonomy standing on post-conventional premises of the organization of society and postmetaphysical principles of the action of the subject.

The critique of the old premises of citizenship has already been carried out by many authors confronting the Marshallian account of citizenship. These approaches are crucial for advancing a concept of citizenship that has been detaching from the constellation of notions articulated in the legal models and supporting abstractions of national identity. A review of them sets the discussion ahead in the contemporary context of the struggles for the social recognition of the status of citizenship and the mutual recognition of the rights of citizenship flourished in the second half of the twentieth century:

(i) Michael Mann condemns the ethnocentric and evolutionary perspective underlying Marshall's theory of citizenship only in the historical context of Great Britain. Mann complains about the lack of attention given to other countries and points out the earlier appearance of the same types of rights. In Germany, for instance, social rights appeared before they did in Great Britain. Pierre Rossanvallon (2008) also appeals to the example of Germany and adds the case of France to affirm, firstly, that the form of the *Welfare State* in which those rights also took place before in the former and, secondly, that all the rights were unpacked after the revolutionary period in the latter. Those historical facts prove the shortcomings of the Marshallian analysis and a conception of analysis limited to a national context.

(ii) Anthony Giddens, Ralf Dahrendorf and Jürgen Habermas criticize the neutrality of the Marshallian theory based on a monological conception underlying its idealized progression⁵⁶. Giddens condemns Marshall's vision of a continuous and peaceful process of rights development as if it were a natural evolution with no connection to social

⁵⁶ “[...] the modern drive towards social equality is, I believe, the latest phase of an evolution of citizenship which has been in continuous progress for some 250 years” (Marshall 1990 p. 10).

contradictions. For its part, Dahrendorf remarks the difference between the subjects that can be citizens with regard to the conditions of labor and capital of the *Welfare State* from those that cannot be it because of different circumstances encompassed within the same type of society such as the immigrants, elderly persons and others. Habermas (1996, p. 504) makes a philosophical argument against Marshall as follows: “This description is blind to the actual use made of an active citizenship status that allows individuals to play a role in democratically changing their own status. Indeed, only rights of political participation around the citizen's reflexive, self-referential legal standing”. These critical insights give support to the idea that citizenship must be thought beyond an external perspective to the social contradictions.

(iii) The last group of critiques is directed against the consensual paradigm that inspires Marshall's conception of citizenship. Anthony Giddens (1982) is emphatic in his argument, indicating that the conquest of new rights is due to social struggle and not modern institutions' merits. Giddens defends a critical perspective in which rights are considered the product of the conflict proposed by the oppressed and marginalized for their material affirmation against the privileged groups in society⁵⁷. Brian Turner (1986) tempers this critical understanding with a more sober approach, suggesting that Marshall's theory can be interpreted from a conflictual perspective. Turner estimates the importance of the institutionalized guarantees that can be appreciated in Marshall's account but goes beyond them assuring the strategic use of the existing rights by the subordinated groups to achieve their interests. In this sense, Turner indicates that despite Marshall overlooking social conflict, his explanation might be interpreted as the projection of what the oppressed groups must fight for. Lastly, in a similar sense, Jack Barbalet (1988) argues in favor of a notion of conflict that is not fully developed in Marshall's theory of citizenship but is sketched in his essay. This notion of conflict considers the principles of citizenship, on the one hand, and the capitalist society, on the other; therefore, rights can be the product of a contradiction of those

⁵⁷ In 1964 Reinhardt Bendix (1977) suggested a similar approach from a perspective that stresses how the interest of the ruling classes reduces the positive effects of the rights.

principles mediated institutionally and stirring this tension might be a historical project of citizenship.

Enhancing the conflicts of <<social citizenship>>

Those critiques were produced by fifty years in the context of confrontation with the Marshallian conception of citizenship, but today, they exceed this scope and shape a new sense of scrutiny. The reflections of authors already referred, such as Dahrendorf, Mann, Turner, Bendix, Barbolet, Giddens, and Held, have promoted a sociological shift for the idea of citizenship that entails: in the first place, a step ahead regarding the hegemony of the liberal perspectives and the legal model of citizenship -altogether with their formal abstractions-; in second place, it situates the problem of citizenship in the practical relations of the contemporary society; and, in third place, they are oriented towards a critical analysis of problems of exclusion, marginalization, and injustice produced in contemporary times.

In all cases, the general notion of citizenship assumed in the sociological model implied the allocation of the discussion about citizenship in close relation to the idea of *civil society* in which the social conflicts were mediated by the *Welfare State* and the mechanisms of participation of mass democracies. As such -following Marshall- Parsons (1969, 1971) understood the evolution of the three types of rights as the development of normative structures that define the functioning of a *societal community* differentiated from the economy and the State. Such normative structures are displayed as a product of stabilizing the legal system of rights that guarantee equal conditions to be a member of the societal community (the *social rights*). But, in addition, Parsons said that the normative structures are operated by collectivities or social groups made of the solidarity of their members⁵⁸. Accordingly, citizenship had to be understood as the subject of a *civil society* in which social classes, associations, group interests, social movements, and identity groups provide the experiences and senses of being a citizen and taking part in society as the same sociological

⁵⁸ About the similarities and differences of the concept of civil society between Parsons and Hegel, see (Cohen and Arato 1994).

object of analysis. Similarly, Brian Turner's (1993) definition of citizenship by the time is paradigmatic in that sense:

Citizenship may be defined as that set of practices (juridical, political economic and cultural) which define a person as a competent member of society, and which as a consequence shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups. It is useful to indicate the most important aspects of this definition. First, it seems to be important to emphasize the idea of *practices* in order to avoid a state and juridical definition of citizenship as merely a collection of rights and obligations. The word "practices" should help us to understand the dynamic social construction of citizenship which changes historically as a consequence of political struggles. Thus, the concept of social practice is intended to pinpoint the idea of citizenship as genuinely sociological as distinct from a legal or political notion. Secondly, this definition of citizenship places the concept squarely in the debate about inequality, power differences and social class, because citizenship is inevitably and necessarily bound up with the problem of the unequal distribution of resources in society" (p. 43).

However, this time, in which citizenship appeared to be an object of analysis from the lenses of the sociological model, was also the era of the strong tendencies to reinforce public management of the economy, the pacification of capitalist contradictions under the tenets of the *Welfare State*, and the use of legal reforms intended to enforce the constitutionalizing of positive liberties⁵⁹. The dialectics of the historical process that runs from the universalization of civil rights to the universalization of social rights -using Balibar's (2014) vocabulary- resulted gradually in the appearance of new problems linked to the institutional misrecognition of social minorities and excluded groups from the provisions of the *Welfare State* and the participation in the public sphere. Progressively, it also led to a displacement of the tensions between the structural basis of the social institutions oppressing several social groups and the claims for an enhanced political autonomy commonly portrayed in those times as struggles over redistribution⁶⁰. Thus, operating within the complexities of a new regime of capital accumulation, the idea of citizenship under consideration in the social model

⁵⁹ See, Habermas (1996); Balibar (2015).

⁶⁰ See, the classical debates between steered by Nancy Fraser with Honneth (2002) Young and Fraser (1997). Also, see Young (1990) for a general presentation of the problems of justice and recognition as the two main concerns of the political theory in the period of the time referred.

offered the disclosure of the conflictual basis of the rights of citizenship and the ethical basis of its effective social status; however, limited by a partial measurement of the complexity and dynamism of contemporary capitalism, and an unclarified critical understating of the status of citizenship stemming from the idea of modern political autonomy, the social model of citizenship revealed its political short-comings and historical inadequacies.

Undoubtedly, the evolution of the social model of citizenship attending to problems of institutional recognition and oppression brought a wide range of topics into the academic discourse linked to citizenship. The attention to problems of social exclusion in terms of differences in identity and institutional justice began to reframe the debates about the idea of citizenship, implicating an “[...] explosion of interest in the concept of citizenship among political theorists” -as Kymlicka and Norman (1994) analyzed in the nineties-. Most of the current accounts attest and follow the Marshallian invention of adding an adjective to the term “citizenship” attributing what should be corrected of the dynamics of social injustice. In most of those cases, there was a given assumption that universal progressivity contended in the evolutionary grammar of rights constituted an uncontested consensus about a normative meaning of citizenship. Despite the differences in the source from where the enhancement of the definitions and guarantees could arise, and the institutional reforms to where the new arrangements should have aimed, the definition of citizenship as *rights to citizenship* was generally stable, and the social complexity, from which the conflicts implicated in the misrecognition, exclusion and discrimination could have had a more critical apprehension, was largely ignored as part of the concept of contemporary citizenship. Accordingly, the social model of citizenship proceeded functionally biased in support of a normatively formalized definition of citizenship that largely ignored the socio-conflictual basis as part of the evolutionary dynamism of the concept.

II. Rights and conflicts over autonomy. The conceptual nucleus of citizenship.

The case of Young's <<Differentiated citizenship>>

Since the 1990's, the qualifications of citizenship blossomed by compound definitions, signaling the problems that had to be included in the social analysis of citizenship. *Multicultural citizenship* (Will Kymlica), *cosmopolitan citizenship* (Adela Cortina), *inclusive citizenship* (Ruth Lister), and *ecological citizenship* (Gudynas) (among many others) continued the progressist and reformist account inaugurated by Marshall. With remarkable exception to this view, but strangely aligned with the tendency towards the qualification of the discourse citizenship by adding a term, Iris Marion Young argued for a critical account of citizenship that ensured its evolution and awakened critical awareness in the context of the *Welfare State*:

It has become clear however, that many groups -blacks, women, Aboriginal peoples, ethnic and religious minorities, gays and lesbians- still feel excluded from the "common culture", despite possessing the common rights of citizenship. Members of these groups feel excluded not only because of their socioeconomic status but also because of their sociocultural identity -their "difference". An increasing number of theorists, whom we will call "cultural pluralists", argue that citizenship must take account of these differences. Cultural pluralists believe that the common rights of citizenship, originally defined by and for white men, cannot accommodate the special needs of minority groups. These groups can only be integrated into the common culture if we adopt what Iris Marion Young calls a conception of "differentiated citizenship" (Kymlica and Norman 1994 p. 171).

The account of citizenship developed by Iris Marion Young stands for the most eloquent contribution to the new debates about the idea of citizenship and in terms of advancing its conceptual development in the last decades by emphasizing the differences in society beyond class. It is more attuned to the social complexity in which the rights of citizenship are inscribed and the dynamics of conflicts from which new configurations of citizenship are essentially tied up since they have arisen in modern times. In the context of a theory of justice based on recognition and participation, Young reaches a normative idea of citizenship, taking into account the repression and marginalization institutionally inflicted on some social groups. "Difference" is, in a strict sense, what upholds the normative content of her formulation, and it is directed against the universalized recognition of certain identities in the grammar of rights and the institutional framework reproducing exclusion and

oppression. Accordingly, what is at stake in the general context of her account of social difference is the problematization of the given and legitimized neutrality and impartiality of the institutional discourses secured in the juridic-political framework of the State and reproduced by the socio-cultural practices overlying the maintenance of oppression against the excluded social groups.

Thus, Young argues that the interactions taking place in contemporary societies are problematic and a normative formulation of *differentiated citizenship* linked to her theory of justice aims against such neutrality and impartiality specifically inscribed in the universal grammar of abstract rights to which citizenship is commonly assimilated. To attack this, Young's account claims to recognition of the cultural differences underlying the institutional frameworks of contemporary society, and her critique points directly to the status of citizenship sustained by rights in the legal formalities of liberal democracies. This elaboration places her beyond the emphasis on class asserted as the core of problems disclosed after Marshall's essay and it surpasses the several abstract biases of liberal theories of justice regarding problems of race and gender. Remarkably, Young stated against the normative political theories supporting the assumptions of a defended universal consensus of liberal institutions and discourses:

In a society where some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, insisting that as citizens persons should leave behind their particular affiliations and experiences to adopt a general point of view serves only to reinforce the privilege; for the perspective and interests of the privileged will tend to dominate this unified public, marginalizing or silencing those of other groups (Young 1989 p. 228).

However, Young's account of citizenship originated within the scope of a general theory of justice in which a stable reference to a general grammar of rights, in which the results of a politics of recognition were to be reflected, seems to be maintained and -at the same time- the fragmented contemporary social world, in which the heterogeneous claims were to take place, appears to be untreated regarding its complexity. In accordance with Nancy Fraser's (1997) critique, Young's account provides a less radical view of politics, positioning "difference" in the center because, on the one hand, the challenges against the

social structure -at best- are indirectly posed, and the necessary connections (i.e., relations of solidarity) between the differentiated social groups are not effectively explained. Thus, the critical diagnosis concerning which structures of social life produces the oppression and their transformation within a normative account remains highly undetermined and ambiguous.

Those issues affect the specificity of *differentiated citizenship*. In the essay in which the proposition appears formulated in normative terms to solve the problems of exclusion and misrecognition, Young says that “[...] the solution lies at least in part by providing institutionalized means for the explicit recognition and representation of oppressed groups”⁶¹. This idea is not, of course, a simple claim for more rights, but it reveals that, at the moment in which the critique of exclusion and misrecognition of social groups is formulated in the problematic category of citizenship, the normative terms relying on difference lessen their radical scope by encountering and asserting the stable normativity related to the rights of citizenship. Young conceals the identitarian struggles with an a priori idea of virtuous liberal institutions capable of recognition. By means of this, she reduces the centrality of conflicts for the definition of citizenship and relies on the possibility of a formal status of citizenship supported by suitable rights with the sensitive mechanism of operation. Accordingly, social complexity steering the conflicts is overlooked as a fundamental moment -and as a conceptual component-, and the validity exceeding the institutionalization of new arrangements that signals an effective mutual recognition is missed in the apprehension of the contemporary theory of citizenship. Thus, even though Young’s idea of citizenship gives attention to social struggles and their crucial importance in correcting the contemporary social institutions, her account of the political capacity of the oppressed social groups to transform the conditions of oppression does not retain the motivational force that presses

⁶¹ “I assert, then, the following principle: a democratic public, however that is constituted, should provide mechanisms for the effective representation and recognition of the distinct voices and perspectives of those of its constituent groups, that are oppressed or disadvantaged within it. Such group representation implies institutional mechanisms and public resources supporting three activities: (1) self-organization of group members so that they gain a sense of collective empowerment and a reflective understanding of their collective experience and interests in the context of the society; (2) voicing a group’s analysis of how Social policy proposals affect them, and generating policy proposals themselves, in institutionalized contexts where decision makers are obliged, to show that they have taken these perspectives into consideration; (3) having veto power regarding specific policies that affect a group directly, for example, reproductive rights for women or use of reservation lands for Native Americans (Young, 1989)”.

change grounded in contestation and the justification of the moral claims to recognition of difference remains attached to the structure of the given socio-historical institutions.

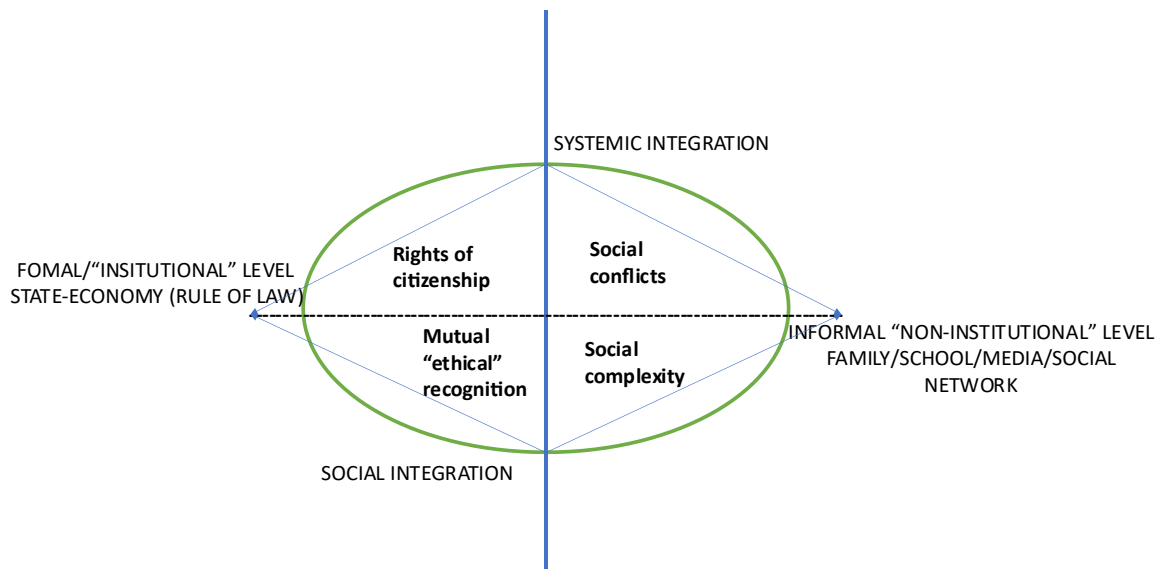
The double-edge conceptual nucleus of citizenship

Despite its historical importance, the idea of *differentiated citizenship* presents a few limitations. These are evident from the perspective of a critical account of citizenship that seeks to acknowledge its scope and clarify its groundings as one of the most important political ideas. By means of Young's account, there are two crucial theoretical instances in which a critical approach to citizenship can result in diminished and displaced citizenship. Firstly, a stance of mutual understanding and recognition that the members of a society must realize in order to effectively ensure the rights of citizenship can be narrowed employing a lack of differentiation between, on the one hand, the conditions of participation in the political sphere, in which the recognition of subjects is practically negotiated; and, on the other hand, the settings regulating access in the domain of the organized powers (as the administrative power and the legal rights enacted), in which the claims are institutionally secured. Secondly, the complexity of the effective social status of the citizen can be overlooked as a consequence of an uninformed account of the social validity steering the conflicts and contradictions from which the status of citizenship emerges in a historical moment. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that no matter how rights are legally renewed, enhanced, and reinforced, the stance of mutual recognition carried out in the informal spaces of the political sphere assures the adequate social status that those same members secure in the grammar of legal rights; and, the conflictual basis of citizenship stemming from the complexity of the contemporary society must be included in a way that it is aware of the wide range of *latent functions* encouraging determinations and limitations that overlie: the given socio-effective status that recognizes certain members of the community as citizens, and the normative claims aiming at the disputation of such given status.

On that basis, I claim here to agree that citizenship has a double-edge conceptual nucleus made out from (i) *the rights of citizenship that the member of society mutually recognizes* and (ii) *the conflicts steered by the given socio-historical complexity*. Thus, dividing the nucleus into two sides, there is an institutional and a non-institutional level of

every part of this formalized nucleus that installs the idea of citizenship in the complicated dynamism of contemporary societies. At the institutional level, citizenship rights reflect the entitlements that every member of the society must have and recognize to participate in the political community as a free and equal subject. That entails both the legal provisions secured by the power of the State and the ethical grammars implicated in the normative structure of the symbolically mediated contexts of social life. At the non-institutional level, the instability produced under historical conditions of pluralism, differentiation, and fragmentation of the contemporary social world implies that contestation is an intrinsic dynamic of the social status and cultural representation of the members of a political community. This level includes the moments of problematic exchanges between antagonist interests and representations of the good life, and it also articulates the operation of the valid social order shaped by the economy and the administrative power of the State under the production regime in Capitalism.

Double-edged conceptual nucleus of citizenship:



Any alteration originating at every side of the nucleus implicates the other in the sense that a reform of the validity of rights cannot be sustainable without a transformation of the social practices of relationality and the struggles seeking to alter the composition of the social world is at risk to be unsuccessful without achieving an institutional reform of the normative structures. The power-transcending of the practice of citizenship relies on its connection with the autonomy of the subjects to whom the rights are ascribed. Then, citizenship is normatively at stake when there is an enhancement of constitutional protections for certain individuals, animals, or even nature (as it happens today by means of legal reforms or judiciary adjudications), and citizenship is also involved when solidarity or reciprocity modifies the institutional arrangements including respect for racialized minorities or when responsibility for the planet is well incorporate into a new common sense. In the other direction, citizenship is also involved in immanence the subjective experiences within the given socio-historical world. Therefore, citizenship is critically at stake within contexts of power that negatively represses the capacity of subjects to display their autonomous agency by means of getting involved in deliberations capable of reaching rational agreements beyond the given normativity. The situatedness of the autonomy of subjects in contemporary models of practical reason supports the fact that the capability to exercise freedom is imbued in the social experience that the institutional complexes allow throughout life. Accordingly, the problems linked to the status of being a citizen in a community, such as misrecognition of labor in areas deprived of the ascription of capitalist value, cultural exclusion of indentarian differences, and discrimination of racialized minorities, always reflect the critical situation from which the subjective political powers can flourish in the existing social order. Within the contexts of social reproduction and integration of the variable and mutable regimes of contemporary capitalist accumulation, citizenship is also subjected to the negative effects of personal, cultural, and relational crises steered by the dynamics of accumulation. In this sense, conflicts engendered by the abuse of the care work, the misfortune of migrants, and the calamity of the destruction of nature place the discourse of citizenship on critical stilts to be grasped in the scope of a complex, historical, and practical definition of its meaning.

Citizenship is, therefore, referred to the subjective capacity to transform the social conditions in which one is encountered and finds its ways of reproduction through dialectics of immanence and transcendence within a given historical situation, in which it could either mean that the autonomous freedom of the subjects can be surrender to pathological forms of interactions induced by the imperatives of repressive modes of social integration, or, in which citizens pursue an emancipatory track through the means of getting involved in deliberations. Therefore, a critical theory of citizenship must thematize the sources of the social evils as injustices, dominations, and oppressions that constrain the political autonomy by means of inflicting motivational restrictions in a wide range of subjective sufferings that, nevertheless, can be grasped as social pathologies curtailing emancipatory deliberations. And, in the same amount, a critical account of citizenship must offer reasons for an emancipatory perspective in which the agency of citizens can surpass the blockages pressing on the political autonomy by virtue of a disclosure of the motivational force implicated in deliberations and the justificatory practices equipped with the sufficient capacity of changing the instituted social world.

The focus on the double-edge nucleus allows a formalization of the point of departure to deal with the dialectics of immanence and transcendence underlying the contemporary challenges of citizenship. It is possible, based on the strong presupposition that this nucleus expresses the principle of autonomy that needs to be considered in the theoretical and practical approaches to citizenship in contemporary times. In accordance with this and the motives implicated in a critical approach to the current problems linked to the political exercise of autonomy, the internal connection between the modern idea of autonomy and the concept of citizenship needs to be reconstructed. The systematic coherence of a current critical account of citizenship highly relies on the way autonomy is assumed in the theoretical understanding of social practices and revealed in the normative arguments of political representations. Without the contours of a philosophical awareness of the presumed notion of autonomy, any idea of citizenship is at risk of being misplaced, overlooked, or disregarded.

Citizenship is the status that results from social struggles claiming political autonomy and the name of the place where the conflicts occur. The juridical appearance of the social

relations and the ethical imaginaries in which the status is reflected stem from the given socio-historical contexts of integration and the effective forms of rights recognized between the members of society. The nucleus of the status of citizenship is made out of the dynamics of a lifeworld in which social relations are mediated by the historical form of the institutions shaping the identities, values, and patterns of recognition and what the subjects encountering such lifeworld in daily interactions make with the institutions. When the given socio-cultural background of daily interactions that the fabric of the lifeworld sustains becomes problematized -as it has occurred many times in history in every society- conflicts arise as an intrinsic element of any definition of citizenship. These struggles are commonly performed by a group of members of society that place themselves on the disadvantaged side of the imbalances secured by the social institutions and include an expectation of normative warrant by the legal system derived from a process of public confrontation. Citizenship is, therefore, defined by a double-edged nucleus in which the normative recognition of rights and the conflicts driven by claims of political autonomy are essentially and internally connected. It is part of this work to disclose that this doubled-edged nucleus is subjected to permanent upheavals caused by the external powers and the internal forces that frequently place the validity of social institutions and the performance of normative claims in tension and its limits are redrawn.

The autonomy of <<Democratic citizenship>>

Going back to the story about the release of the sociologically oriented theories of citizenship developed after T.H. Marshall's essay, these discourses centered the discussion on the midst of the tension between social conflicts and the rights of citizenship. Following the readings of the social model, the idea of modern citizenship can be clearly placed in the tension between the complexity of modern society, including the inevitable struggles it engenders *and* the claims seeking to establish the rights that certain social groups deserve against the given normative status of participation in social life. Notably among those readings, David Held (1989; 2006) saw in the idea of autonomy the axis of the political struggles fueling the historical issues of citizenship at stake. For Held (1989), citizenship

involves the struggle for membership and participation in the community, [and] then its analysis involves examining the way in which different groups, classes and movements struggle to gain degrees of autonomy and control over their lives in the face of various forms of stratification, hierarchy and political oppression (p. 199).

Held not only ratifies the tension driving citizenship, but he also attests that struggles themselves are intrinsically tied to the awareness about the level of autonomy that can be gained under different structures of domination. The normativity of citizenship remarkably derives from the autonomy in dispute by strategies of contestation against “the domains in which citizens have sought to pursue their own activities within the constraints of community” (1989, p. 201). As such, Held (1989) adds that

If early attempts to locate in which one was born and from prescribed occupations, later struggles involved such things as freedom of speech, expression, belief and association, and freedom for women in marriage. The autonomy of the citizen can be represented by the bundle of rights which individuals can enjoy as a result of their status [achieved] as “free and equal” members of society (p. 201).

Accurately, Held discloses the sociopolitical connection missing in the contemporary discourses of citizenship between the conflicts shaped by the necessities fueling the recognition of different statuses in modern citizenship and the normative-practical sense of the autonomy carried out by those actors who seek recognition by means of the claims to freedom. *Autonomy* and *social struggles* confirm the double sidedness of a contemporary idea of citizenship constantly subjected to endless instability, disclosed against the historically given social institutions, and warranted in the grammar of rights. Moreover, Held’s entanglement of the core faces of the notion attests that, although it has been traditionally challenging to detach all these elements from the vague use of citizenship in political discourses, one can distinguish the specific social dynamics associated with the problems of membership to a political community -in the forms of claims, recognition, and declaration- from the *conceptual content* that corresponds to the political autonomy at stake within the social complexity shaped by the diversity of identities, the plurality of forms of life, and contradictory interests.

For Held (1989), struggles that seek to redefine the given status of the citizen and the rights implicate a claim for the realization of freedom and equality produced in modernity. Contemporary social struggles induce a sociohistorical analysis of citizenship connected to the issues posed by the new social movements. This, therefore, advances the “post-Marshall debate” of citizenship in which its “nature” and “extent” could be redefined. Held insists that the concept can now clearly appear as a “medium” for conflicts proposed by certain social groups portraying their strategies “to enhance and protect their rights and opportunities” (p. 200). However, Held’s clarification of the idea of autonomy seems to be short of upholding a strong normative coherence in his late systematic work when citizenship is closely placed and tied to the social complexity of our times. In the work of 2000’s midst, Held (2006) proposes to attach the normative core of the concept of citizenship to the ideas of *democratic autonomy* and *democratic legitimacy* to develop a comprehensive theory of contemporary democracy in which the old philosophical traditions of liberalism and republicanism can be consistently represented.

The problem in Held’s (2006, pp. 270-333) renowned analysis of the models of democracy is that the actualization of the democratic principles that secure his contemporary idea of citizenship relies *uncritically* on the foundationalist philosophical premises and the monological models of social action of the European classical political ideas. For Held, the principle of *autonomy* is the crucial axis of the nobilities of democracy and modern citizenship because it is the idea underlying any possible “demarcation of legitimate power” in which people can “pursue their interests” (to choose freely) with “independence” (self-consciously, self-reflectively, and self-determinably). The virtuosity of Held’s idea of *democratic autonomy* is argued to be defined by its compatibility with the main traditions of political thought: it retains the individualistic core of moral freedom, inspiring liberalism and the anonymous legally enacted community that regulates participatory procedures in the republican tradition. Clearly, in this argumentative context, the analysis of the notion of autonomy is less concerned with practical implications than with the theoretical elaboration; however, it retains consistency with Held’s earlier account inasmuch it is logical that both the ideas of “movements struggle” and “levels of autonomy” essentially linked to his

contemporary concept of citizenship depend on the availability of values and institutions of modern democracy to be claimed and obtained.

Thus, autonomy, democracy and social conflicts are the outstanding sources of a systematic and inspiring approach to the idea of contemporary citizenship, but, at the same time, the theoretical sources on which it rests retain problematic implications. If *democratic autonomy* can only be valued as the idealistic product of the classic European normative philosophies of politics, the idea of moral freedom, more greatly disclosed in Kant's practical philosophy, is at odds with losing its transcendence validity in our current historical times of institutional crisis. Similarly, if social conflicts are tied to the pure immanency of the defensive demarcation of social powers, political struggles could only be assessed as forms of unrest limited, in advance, by instrumental rationality of penniless social actors simply seeking to achieve or enhance the scope of their strategic goals. Consequently, the principle of autonomy at the center of one of the most advanced contemporary concepts of citizenship lessens its validity force amidst a model that, despite criticizing up to a certain degree the individualism supporting the classical political traditions, assesses it from an undefined and abstract perspective of non-restrictive power. Thus, these implications curtail the normative transcendence linked to a truly strong principle of autonomy by conceiving the moral claims involved in the process of contesting deliberation under the tenets of strategic action.

Then, Held reveals the importance of clarifying the idea of autonomy for the adequate normative coherence of the concept of citizenship; however, there are problems with his account inasmuch he retains old-fashioned models of rationality and social action. Then, an analysis assuming the advances of his formulation concerning the core idea of autonomy, but also moving beyond its barriers, is the task that should be brought to grips. Autonomy must be grasped within the historical, social world of institutions and interactions that shape its situated normative validity. The common ground of autonomy supporting the formal core of citizenship must be suitable for reconstruction considering the immanence and transcendence shaping its realizability. To do so, the notion of autonomy must be placed under the tenets of a model of rationality that interprets subjective freedom as a performance of practical reason immanently to social contexts without losing the capability of exerting its

transcending validity. As such, autonomy must be framed in the premises of an intersubjective philosophy and communicative interaction to be coherently attached to the formal nucleus of contemporary citizenship. After these, new perspectives on the historical status of the idea of citizenship can arise, a systematic critical analysis can gain coherence.

III. Citizenship as political autonomy. A theoretical frame based on communication.

The self-legislation of citizens

Modern autonomy is consistently formulated in the well-known conceptions of moral freedom of Rousseau and Kant. For them, it generally indicates the capacity to bind oneself to the laws that also appear to be the product of one's will. Reconstructing its normative sources, Jürgen Habermas submits autonomy to a systematic variation, arguing for an intersubjective and communicative reformulation that shifts the focus on, first, the universal self-given rational capacities to distance oneself from immediate inclinations to the account that the self becomes a moral subject in processes of practical social learning stemming from which one is capable of having experience by acting and speaking with others; and second, Habermas' conception of autonomy also moves beyond monological schemes of social action towards a dialogical model in which the normativity mediating social interactions is examined in processes of giving and receiving reasons and by means of types of claims raised by the subjects in accordance with the rightness ascribed to the normative goods extracted from the context of life they find themselves involved. Relying on pragmatism and dialogical reformulations of human experience, Habermas establishes the idea of autonomy as the core of his practical philosophy and seeks to derive an emancipatory critical potential from the capacity itself of the individuals to get involved in deliberations. Within this scope, he formulates the concept of *political autonomy* as the expression of the content of subjective modern freedom in the political arena, which is concerned with the practical process of

collective will formation, including the difficulties derived from the social complexity that accompanies the factuality of the contemporary social world:

The idea of self-legislation, which implies moral autonomy at the level of the individual will, takes on the meaning of political autonomy at the level of collective will-formation. Political autonomy [...] is not just the legal form alone that distinguishes political from moral self-legislation, but the contingency of the form of life, of goals and interest positions establishing the identity of the self-determining political will in advance. Although the morally good will is fully absorbed, as it were, into practical reason, even the rationally grounded political will retains a certain contingency insofar as it rests on context-dependent reasons. This explains why the common ground of shared beliefs, achieved discursively in different political arenas also generates communicative power (Habermas 1996 p. 157)

There are several remarkable issues in the quote representing and signaling the contours of the critical idea of citizenship intended to be defined in this dissertation. And in essence, it covers the entire *normative* scope of the argument intended⁶². Firstly, political autonomy is correctly linked to moral autonomy under the common grounds of an idea of self-legislation that indicates the strong principle of subjective modern freedom that must be assumed in a critical concept of citizenship. Considering the long history and the several conceptions available, that is an important clarification that must be faced to explain the idea's critical content and current political scope.

Secondly, it includes the awareness that citizenship should not be assimilated to the legal form of the rights to which it is linked and signals the appropriate level of reflection wherein they are connected and can be commonly derived. Along with the differences that can be established for the ideas of moral autonomy and political autonomy under the common

⁶² I remark here that such elements cover the normative scope, but that is not enough for the critical account of citizenship displayed here. For this, such a normative model of citizenship as political autonomy must be complemented with a socio-critical model capable of diagnosing the historical-practical blockages of political autonomy. As it is shown later, my habermasian grounds on both political normativity and social diagnosing need a closer reconsideration on the latter in accordance with the historical conditions of Neoliberal-capitalism and the conceptualization of the blocking social powers.

ground of self-legislation, the legal form of rights that warrant the achievements of practical consensus and the processes of intersubjective recognition as free and equals could be adequately coupled in the practical ground of deliberation occurring in the socio-institutional spaces of daily life. This helps to avoid abstract idealizations of the exercise of autonomy that assimilate the accomplishment of fair political interactions to procedural models of institutionalized legitimacy and/or to a certain ethical virtue attached to a specific form of life.

Thirdly, the quote remarkably inscribes the occurrence of deliberations realizing the content of autonomous freedom in the complexity of the contemporary social world. It submits the possibilities of practicing freedom to the ineludible contingency of the context of life encountered when trying to achieve the aims of self-will within the frame of onerous burdens, unstable compromises, and fragile arrangements. Moreover, that also derives from the inevitable attachment that the realization of political autonomy takes with the confrontation of the ethical life in which it tries to arise.

Fourthly, Habermas delineates the path for a fruitful discussion of political will formation informed of the *context-dependence* of any reason seeking to gain track in deliberations. This reveals a hint that the quote aids in finding the place in which the normative implications of political autonomy can be disclosed as a model of critical transformation dependent on the transcendence capacities that the validity claims raised in communicative interactions could provide. Ascribed to a communicative paradigm of social interactions, the political claims that could be raised in interactions must address, at a contextual level, the limitations curtailing the ignition, development, and realization of processes of deliberation, and they aim to surpass these hindrances in order to produce enough counterpower against the given sociohistorical conditions imposing those situations.

These are all the dimensions of a concept of citizenship that fulfills the weaknesses of the other ideas reconstructed up to this point and, moreover, sustains the critical reflection of the depoliticized contemporary social relations that will be displayed in the following chapters. A closer look at these key issues provides the basis for a coherent and systematic treatment of the idea of autonomy underlying any critical concept of citizenship at the level

of our socio-historical conditions. Therefore, in what follows, I seek to assert the normative constellation of the concept of citizenship, reconstructing the essential foundations of political autonomy based on communicative rationality. As implicated, the dialogical and intersubjective presuppositions of autonomy amplify the dimensions of normativity one and two previously disclosed. Despite mentioning the dimensions three and four, these are particularly implicated in the analysis of the last chapter since they provide the sources of the critique of power relations I seek to derive from my account of citizenship.

Practical autonomy

Autonomy is at the center of the entire systematic work developed by Habermas. For him, it represents a “harmless” “dogmatic core” of any critical theory that acknowledges the very essential appreciation that the life of a person is shaped and performed in a particular form of life:

“The idea of autonomy according to which human beings act as free subjects only insofar as they obey those laws they give themselves in accordance with the insights they have acquired intersubjectively. This is “dogmatic” only in a harmless sense [...] with the fact of the symbolic infrastructure of sociocultural forms of life, which is to say that *for us*, who have developed our identity in such a form of life, it cannot be circumvented” (Habermas, 1996 p. 445-446).

Habermas concludes his great oeuvre on legal and political theory (*Between Facts and Norms*) precisely with those words, but, indeed, they reflect his profound recast of the Kantian idea of moral autonomy and his fruitful consideration on the idea of autonomous ethical agency or personal autonomy. Accordingly, Kantian morality is subjected to an intersubjective reading under which self-determination is dependent on actualization of the freedom ascribed to all (Habermas, 1990), reflected on the capacity of free choosing what one wants to do in accordance with the *rightness* one also subscribes to reasons (Habermas, 1993; 2003), and, expressed on the ability to offer argumentative justifications aiming to seek the understanding of others (Habermas 1993). Habermas’s intersubjective moral autonomy embraces universal, cognitivist, and formal presuppositions of freedom in a certain specific

that, nevertheless, rejects foundationalism, essentialism, and purity of the nature of the practical reason (Cooke, 2020; 2006; 1992). Instead, he conceives autonomy within the scope of a “conception of moral validity defined in terms of argumentatively achieved agreement as to the generalizability of interests can be extracted from formal-pragmatic investigations into the presuppositions of moral argumentation” (Cooke 2006b p. 51). Moreover, Habermas’ awareness of the challenges posed against stable, abstract, and strong versions of moral autonomy leads him to confront Hegelian critiques and postmodernist rejection of the reach of autonomous agency with a communicative conception of reason. This view supports the realizability of autonomy in the capacity of critical reflexivity that one can display within the scope of limited –but frequent- dialogical interactions in which norms, beliefs, intuitions, and practices are confronted with the personal expectations involved (Habermas 1995; 1996)⁶³.

Intersubjective and dialogical inputs to moral autonomy derive from a conception of communicative rationality in which practical reason is “ascribed to social reality itself - incorporated in it, as it were-” (Habermas, 1996, p. 9) and is reflected in the effective performance of certain idealizing presuppositions that guide the interactions taking place in sociocultural contexts historically shaped. The result of this practical conception of autonomy is that subjects can be rationally accountable for the historical place in which they find themselves and discover the sources for a rational motivation and justification of the norms, practices, and discourses involved in their social relations. Practical autonomy, therefore, includes the capacity to assess the validity of the given sociocultural world and the potentiality of transforming it. Thus, this model consists of a robust view of the ways by which identities are shaped and the instability of the power relations that come across such processes (Allen 2008). Habermas’s conception of practical autonomy also includes a far-

⁶³ “Of course, as soon as the values become problematic, the question “What ought we do?” takes on beyond the horizon of purposive rationality. Sometimes conflicting preferences express oppositions between interests that cannot be defused at the level of discourse. At other times, however, the contested interest positions and value orientations are so interwoven with a community’s intersubjectively shared form of life that serious decisions about values touch on an unclarified collective self-understanding. *Ethical-political questions* pose themselves from the perspective of members who, in the face of important life issues, want to gain clarity about their shared form of life and about the ideals they feel should shape their common life” (Habermas, 1996 p. 160).

reaching notion of personal autonomy covered by ethical groundings that support a critical theory of society that is immanent to its historical developments and secures the sources of emancipation in the transcendental forces nurtured in the human capabilities of learning throughout communicative processes of argumentation and justification⁶⁴.

That implies that the intersubjective and dialogical conception of practical autonomy needs to relate to the political performance of the context-transcending capabilities of communicative interaction. That is, practical autonomy needs to be defined in a model of political autonomy that mediates and puts into practice the questions of justice concerning moral freedom and the questions of good life attached to the problematic issues of ethical self-determination. Based on his entire view of practical reason, Habermas proposes the famous *co-originality* of private and public autonomy to translate the entire force of his version of practical autonomy to the domains of the field of political and legal theory and the queries for democracy. Habermas (1996) postulates that the idea of political autonomy has been considered under premises that undermine its normative coherence and critical scope to be posed as a well-sustained grounding for modern and contemporary politics. Liberal and republican traditions are the subjects of this attack since those models emphasize an abstract normativity of human social action. Habermas, then, claims for a “mutual complementation” of private and public rooted in the historical, modern genesis of the ideas of individual rights and popular sovereignty and reflected in a formal political principle of political autonomy.

Habermas’ pathbreaking achievement in balancing the normative content of private and public autonomy articulates the very nature of modern politics with the implications of the intersubjective and dialogical reading of practical reason. Accordingly, political normativity is liberated from the pre-political assumptions and abstract considerations that kept undefined, reified, and undecided key notions such as citizenship⁶⁵. The co-originality

⁶⁴ I follow here and in other crucial parts of this work, the contemporary reading of Habermas’s work mostly developed in the sort of Anglo-Saxon reception of critical theory supported under the tenets of authors such as Thomas McCarthy, Nancy Fraser, Richard Bernstein, James Bohman, Maeve Cooke, and Amy Allen. In chapter 4 I add importance to this clarification by mounting the interpretation of the critical insights of Habermas’s account offered by many of those authors to my account. Their views have allowed set a view of Habermas’s critical theory under pragmatical, weak, and contextual premises that reinvigorate its emancipatory potentialities and critical scope.

⁶⁵ See chapter 1.

argument balances private and public autonomy by sublating the competing traditions of political theory and leveling the normative political content of modern subjective freedom to its socio-practical nature is possible because Habermas carries an analysis at a very fundamental conceptual dimension in a way that submits the coherence of his understating of practical reason to render its effects in the domain of politics. This is achieved by the Discourse (“D”) principle setting the argumentative and justificatory conditions under which political autonomy can be envisioned. For politics, the principle establishes the theoretical criteria under which any practice or institution could be judged as legitimate without recharging any side of the interplay of individual and social powers, but -virtuously- it remains highly unspecific in regard with the conditions in which it can be realized or attained in real sociohistorical process of political interaction.

The <<system of rights>> of citizenship

The straightforward political implications of the theoretical balance between private and public autonomy are seen in the explicit formulation of the elements that make the character of citizenship suitable to the practical autonomy reconstructed above. That is, for Habermas, a “system of rights” that subjects “must mutually grant one another if they want to legitimately regulate their life in common” (1996 p. 118). Thus, This proposition is developed from the assumption that practical reason has been implanted in different forms of life as a consequence of the influence of certain modern institutions and discourses such as human rights, democracy, freedom and common democratic rule. Accordingly, the real validation of the concrete institutions and guarantees vary in different sociocultural contexts in accordance with the given historical process of social learning, but the validity of the contents reflecting freedom, equality and solidarity can be reconstructed as an expression of a sedimented, instable, and unfulfilled general learning process of the human species. Habermas (1996; 2000) provides extensive theoretical support by means of different historical reconstructions about the evolution of constitutional democracies, their philosophical understanding in modern social and political ideas, and considering the concurrence of the new social movements in contemporary times. Consequently, Habermas

(1996 p. 122-123) arrives to the enunciation of five categories of essential presuppositions guiding the political dynamics of our times:

1. Basic rights that result from the politically autonomous elaboration of the *right to the greatest possible measure of equal individual liberties*.

These rights require the following as necessary corollaries:

2. Basic rights that result from the politically autonomous elaboration of the *status of a member* in a voluntary association of consociates under law.

3. Basic rights that result immediately from the *actionability* of rights and from the political autonomous elaboration of individual *legal protection*.

These three categories of rights result simply from the application of the discourse principle to the medium of law as such, that is, to the conditions for the legal form of horizontal association of free and equal persons. They must not yet be understood in the sense of *Abwehrrechte*, that is, liberal rights against the state, because they only regulate the relationship among freely associated citizens *prior to* any legally organized state authority from whose encroachments citizens would have to protect themselves. In fact, the above basic rights guarantee what we now call the *private* autonomy of legal subjects only in the sense that these subjects reciprocally recognize each other in their role of *addressees* of law and therewith grant one another a status on the basis of which they can claim rights and bring them to bear against one another. Only with the next step do legal subjects also become *authors* of their legal order, to be exact, through the following:

4. Basic rights to equal opportunities to participate in process of opinion- and will-formation in which citizens exercise their *political autonomy* and through which they generate legitimate law.

This category of rights is reflexively applied to the constitutional interpretation and the further political development or elaboration of the basic rights abstractly identified in (1) through (4). For political rights ground the status of free and equal active citizens. This status is self-referential insofar as it enables citizens to change

and expand their various rights and duties, or “material legal status”, so as to interpret and develop their private and civic autonomy simultaneously. Finally, with a view towards this goal, the rights listed thus far *imply* the following:

5. Basic rights to the provision of living conditions that are socially, technologically, and ecologically safeguarded, insofar as the current circumstances make this necessary if citizens are to have equal opportunities to utilize the civil rights listed in (1) through (4). (Habermas 1996, p. 122-123)

This extended quote discloses in complex and extensive ways what is at stake in the idea of citizenship that assumes the normative content of political autonomy with coherence and systematicity. Such a “system of rights” clarifies at once the level of abstraction required to grasp in which way citizenship is essentially linked to the aspirations and ascriptions that autonomous subjects seek to achieve in a variety of unspecified forms of social freedom. As Habermas claims, and in accordance with the premises of the practical reason enounced before, that is a presupposition prior to the two following socio-institutional implications of, first, the recognizable *status of a member* in a political community that one can receive and the necessary, second, warrants for such a status in the *form of legal rights*. That is crucial to resolve the problems identified in other formulations of the idea of contemporary citizenship that include the double-edged nucleus of rights and conflicts beyond the foundational premises of the modern European philosophical traditions of politics and the simple views of the contemporary dynamics of the social world. Accordingly, Habermas is also instructive in what must be the focus of a consistent account of the problem of contemporary citizenship beyond those thresholds: the idea of citizenship informed by the normative content of *political autonomy* and the *social complexity* dialectically emerges in the *process of will-formation* in which citizens find themselves practically attached. It is only in this way that the idealistic meanings of the modern ideas of freedom, equality, and solidarity coupled with the exercise of one’s single interest and, moreover, it is only in this fashion that a legitimate form of life can flourish. Lastly, the quote outstanding covers the practical-political implications of such systematic elaboration of the premises of citizenship by indicating the ethical contexts in which political autonomy essentially proves its realization and the

(re)defining potentials that those rights illuminate to confront the problematic living conditions deriving from the economic, technological, and ecological pressures. Thus, Habermas provides more coherence and systematicity combined with critical and complex understanding regarding the problems identified in the competing ideas of contemporary citizenship. But there is more concerning the confrontation and current interpretation of the highly demanding set of practical problems accompanying the long history of the idea of citizenship up today.

The conditions of political autonomy reflected in the “system of rights” make a constellation of idealized presuppositions that citizens must exercise if they want to realize their true political potential. Correspondingly, that includes the disclosure of the subjective capabilities to embrace political autonomy and engage in deliberations as an equal member of a community seeking to achieve an institutionalized consensus and a legitimate democratic rule based on the common resolution of shared problematic living conditions. The “system of rights” provides this ground because it is also based, at a fundamental level, on pragmatic idealizations overriding *all* forms of argumentation (both in “theoretical or scientific discourses” and “practical or moral discourses”). The philosophical investigation and elaboration of the theory on the formal pragmatics of communication is one of the most important contributions to the contemporary social sciences and philosophy and it is important here because it clarifies how the concept of citizenship illuminated by its scope answers the most demanding pressures of social power over political autonomy and how it differentiates itself from other competing paradigms of common agreement such as the ones thought by John Rawls and Hannah Arendt.

Pragmatic idealizing presuppositions of communication

In accordance with communicative rationality, there are pragmatic idealizing presuppositions inherent to *all* intersubjective relations to the extent that they make the specific phenomenon of human interaction possible. Idealizing presuppositions are always contended in the validity claims that one raises, aiming to make what one expresses understandable. Thus, they are inevitable since communication is employed because, following Habermas, one cannot communicate anything without making oneself intelligible

to others and claiming *truth*, *rightness* and *truthfulness* in the process of producing the necessary understanding (*Verständigung*) with others of what is referred to -respectively- in the *objective*, *social* or *subjective* worlds. Those validity claims are speech acts that by virtue of the pragmatic reading of its structural components (propositional, expressive and illocutionary) uphold a concept of meaning beyond reductive or one-sided views to sustain that language is by nature a vehicle to coordinate actions on a rational basis. The meaning carried out in the validity claims one raises in everyday communication is defined by Habermas's thesis, which indicates: "We understand an utterance when we know what makes it acceptable" (Habermas 1984 p. 297). He emphasizes the binding and bonding forces that communications establish between hearers and speakers, including the conditions under which that occurs. Thus, his formal-pragmatic approach submits the concept of meaning to the conditions that underlie the processes of reaching understanding (*Verständigung*) and the courses of negotiating an agreement (*Einverständnis*). These are differentiated instances of the procedures of argumentation involved in interaction, but both rely on similar conditions of acceptability and validity of reasons employed in communicative interactions.

Despite having attached those conditions to the context of intersubjective exchange (communication is context-dependent), the reasonability of communication exceeds these contexts (communication is context-transcendent). Communication carries out the *telos* of aiming beyond the inescapable situationally, contextuality, or particularity of interaction by virtue of the tension between the impulse or reaching an understanding -without which no human interaction is possible- and the immanent evaluation of the validity claims involved in argumentation. That is evident in the disagreements, complaints, requests, assertions, predictions, denouncements, explanations, rectifications, etc., attached to scientific discussions and moral deliberations. These performative utterances relate to unavoidable idealizations no matter how rudimentary or sophisticated, and conventional or post-conventional, the communication is established. Habermas (2008 p. 50) names four "most important" unavoidable idealized presuppositions implicated in the pragmatic nature of communication: that participants are using the same linguistic resources similarly; that no one capable of making a relevant contribution is excluded or denied from participating; that

participants mean what they say; and, that all participants are motivated only by the be convinced by means of the better argument presented⁶⁶.

However, there is no guarantee that communication will develop to the point in which it fulfills its idealized potentialities. Communication is, in that sense, fragile and fallible. Indeed, idealizations are more likely to manifest when inconsistencies are perceived and generate doubts about the “genuineness of an argumentative exchange” (Habermas 2008 p. 51). Therefore, pragmatic idealizations of communicative action are *counter-factual* presuppositions encompassed with argumentative practices as implicit and intuitive knowledge that support the possibilities of opened processes of justification and application and the chances for correcting the courses of interaction in detours from strategically oriented coordination of actions. It is counter-factuality that allows practical detachments from the context-dependency of a validity claim and, despite the fact that it remains as a situation that can only be empirically proven and tested, it provides the sources for a critical theory that proceeds reconstructively diagnosing the blockages curtailing argumentative processes of communicative action and identifying the transcending-power forces in practical terms. Habermas (1998, p. 418) calls counterfactual presuppositions “the nerve of my entire theoretical undertaking”, and, undoubtedly, it upholds his theory's entire emancipatory political potentialities. This is so because the empirically realized and theoretically reconstructed counterfactual procedures do not proceed ideally, formalistically, or abstractly. As Bernhard Peters (1993) and Hauke Brunkhorst (1993) remarkably and clearly indicate, Habermas has set a new methodological procedure in the contemporary social sciences that liberates the reasoning from the mere ought linked to the analytical gap between ideals and reality and beyond the classical opposition between regulative and constitutive ideas. Moreover, what Habermas develops with his formal-pragmatics of communication by

⁶⁶ Maeve Cooke (1994 p. 32-34) remarkably clarifies how these are idealizing presuppositions that apply even to non-European secularized contexts. She distinguishes between idealizations that apply to *all* forms of communicative action and others that apply only to *some* forms of communicative action. In Habermas' terminology the former includes both conventional (non-fully secularized contexts) and postconventional (modern secularized contexts), and the latter includes only the postconventional. Besides the above-mentioned idealized presuppositions, postconventional modes of communicative action include: that all participants would agree to the universality of a validity claim disclosed; that all are aware of the need of equal opportunities to participate and raised introduce new insights to deliberations with egalitarian reciprocity -as Benhabib (1986) also argues-; and, that no argument is exempted from critical evaluation.

disclosing the idealizing presuppositions and the counterfactual procedures is a new set of methodologies encompassed with the fictive representational character of contemporary politics⁶⁷ and the non-foundational premises of current social sciences⁶⁸. Correspondingly, following Peters (1993 p. 240), counterfactual presuppositions provide “the idea of self-organization as a projection of the society as a whole” into the political process of will-formation; and, as Brunkhorst (1993, p. 345) examined, it reveals “deviations” from rational standards of institutionalized practices and discourses reflected in scientific and philosophical endeavors; as Habermas (1998, p. 418) says, idealizing presuppositions offer the “vocabulary of the as-if” to theoretical reflections that aim to make explicit the rationality of the knowledge contended in the “world views, moral representations, and identity formations”(Habermas 1979, p. 98 *Evolution*) by “[taking] a theory apart and [putting] it back together again in a new form to attain more fully the goal it has set for itself” (p. 95).

Politics of (deliberative) communication

Departing from all that makes apprehensible the complex and profound grounds on which Habermas’ political account stands. His theory of political deliberation, as it is commonly labeled, includes the burdens of the pragmatic view on communication carried out by validity claims, its idealizing presuppositions and the counterfactual moments nourishing its critical-emancipatory insights. Therefore, in the context of the discussion of the idea of citizenship, political deliberation more accurately refers to processes of argumentation in which practical discourses illuminate the formation of a common will and decision-making. In this sense, political deliberations of citizens suggest various outcomes ranging from the generation of informal public-political power to new agreements about common interests and legitimate rule impacting the organized administrative power in the political system.

⁶⁷ Cooke (2006) interprets the work of contemporary political theorists such as Rorty, Laclau, and Butler, Honneth and Habermas following the idea of fictive representations of the good society that always includes a gap between the projections and realization that must be concealed in practice by avoiding ideological closures and instating justificatory articulations.

⁶⁸ Different theorists offer a consistence proved of this contemporary tendency in the epistemology of social sciences that includes important names such as Pierre Bourdieu and Boaventura de Sousa Santos.

Therefore, theoretically speaking, political deliberations are non-idealized discursive and immanent interactions mediated throughout context-dependent validity claims that could be rationally redeemed in procedures in which participants appeal to pragmatic idealizations in order to overcome the given (contextual) shortcomings of communicative interactions without any guarantee of success, result or achievement. And, in hypothetical empirical terms, citizen's deliberations combine truth-functional (*Wahrheitsfunktional*) arguments and practical processes that include justificatory detours. These practical interactions could be developed throughout non-problematized strategical means or evolved towards argumentative processes in which the exercise of politically autonomous -by virtue of tracking the real sediments of idealizing presuppositions- generate legitimate communicative power.

Habermas's auto-adherence to the field of studies of *deliberative democracy* and the historical context of the crisis of the *Welfare State*, in which his major political oeuvre was produced, led him to a great contribution to the analysis of the discursive processes of legislation that legitimize the institutions of the Constitutional State. In this fashion, Habermas is renowned by explaining how the communicative power generated in deliberations can transform into administrative power and create a healthy model of political legitimacy. In such a model, the institutionalized procedures of decision-making in the legislative, judicial, and executive powers are seen as the product of an informal public opinion produced in an autonomous public sphere that, during its production as public-political opinion, could limit the autonomized and restrictive social powers of the economy and bureaucracy. This perspective has been recognized as an authentic contribution to contemporary political theory by its capacity to embrace the social-institutional and historical-practical normativity of the constitutional democracies and by the productive discussion it promotes by engaging with other theoretical perspectives. And, indeed, the connection of the Habermasian account of politics with two of the excellent competing paradigms that impacted contemporary normative political theory, such as the Rawlsian and Arendtian, is evident in front of all the features mentioned above of Habermas's practical philosophy and social-political theory.

Rawls

Among the many lines of criticism delineated in different moments of the known exchange between Rawls (1995) and Habermas (1995), what concerns the problem of contemporary politics raises its importance on the differences implicated in the deliberation processes that bring into discussion the right principles of decision making. In contrast to Rawls, Habermas characterizes his conception of deliberation as a process of discursive reasoning that takes into account the moral conceptions of the citizens and, by virtue of a social-theoretical reconstructive approach, he derives from the same processes the model of reasonability that governs the conditions of acceptability of any decision. This opposes to the monological and self-standing account of deliberation shaped from a pure political-theoretical normative approach that sustains the abstract presuppositions of the “original position” and the “veil of ignorance” in Rawls's account (Habermas 2006 *Time of Transitions*). Along with this, Habermas conceives the discursive processes within the objective contexts of institutional complexes of social reproduction that support the inclusion of the socio-historical backgrounds conditioning deliberations. Accordingly, what is implicated in the social realms of the public sphere, the Constitutional State and the systems of economy and bureaucratic power, supports a conception of deliberation that is free-standing in social practices, liberated from high standards of requirements to enter into deliberation, and without the purpose of serving mostly to the design for the basic structure of a society⁶⁹.

Habermas's view, therefore, argues to include altogether the social complexity, the ethical values, and the problematic reality shaping discursive processes of deliberation (Habermas 1996). All these are, in a fashion, reflected in the inspiration of equal citizenship and its exercise in the public autonomous ideal that supports all the formulations in the “system of rights”. Habermas (1998; 2002) understands and somehow ratifies with the late critique of Rawls's views on human rights (Rawls *The Law of Peoples*) and religion, that

⁶⁹ Free-standing standards serve to the purpose of grounding normativity in a weak and pragmatical way, however, as I argue in Chapter III, that is not enough for a contemporary critical idea of citizenship that must acknowledge the situatedness, contextuality, and social immanency of critical reason with emancipatory-political intentions.

the claim of co-originality between private and public autonomy is a critical stance that levels up the principle of collective public interest against the ideas by which the individual rights of private autonomy receive privileged attention in the liberal tradition. Moreover, Habermas' *Kantian republicanism* opposes Rawls's *political liberalism* by exhibiting a clear difference concerning the kind of democratic politics the "system of rights" wants to illuminate. Considering that the Rawlsian's timely reflection was retained without any later philosophical correction, the common grounds of modern individualism and strong rationalism sustain a bias from which dialogical intersubjectivity and post-metaphysical reason liberate (Habermas 1995). The latter presuppositions contrast with the former common liberal grounds, a view of politics and a suitable theoretical account on weak, fragile and fallible premises in which principles of political justice offer acceptability if arguments convince all the participants and can assent to the validity of an action norm *from their own perspectives*⁷⁰.

However, Rawls has been a crucial source of motivation for Habermas' view of politics; likewise, he is an author of great importance for the theory of citizenship. That is because of his attempt to keep the normativity of political theory steadily grounded and, more importantly, by illuminating the virtues of constructivist approaches to politics altogether with the possibilities that it brings to appreciate the cognitivist dimension involved in deliberation processes⁷¹. Thanks to considering these issues under the paradigm of communicative reason, the theory of citizenship can be well-sustained on premises that appreciate the role of the participant's perspective in the processes of making legitimate power in different practical-social contexts.

Arendt

Similar differences and affinities can be found between Habermas and Arendt, considering, however, that the importance of Hannah Arendt can be greater than the Rawlsian theory from the perspective of a current renovation of a theory of citizenship. For its part,

⁷⁰ This is the principle called in Habermas' early work as "U" and later as "D". See the differences in formulation in Habermas (1995; 1996)

⁷¹ I will retake this point in the discussion of the "cognitive moment" of the process of making communicative power that I will develop in Chapter 4.

Hannah Arendt has remained a great source of contrast, motivation, and renovation of Habermas's ideas on communication politics. Her ideas on the public space, communicative power and participation inspired by a model of Greek politics have contributed, in a general sense, to the Habermasian account of political deliberation and, in a particular sense, to the rich nuances of his view on the production of legitimate power. Habermas' consideration of the Arendtian political philosophy is one of great importance given the necessity that he discloses from the very early point of his career to the ideal of the public sphere and the reflective paradigm of theory and practice about the implications of a non-reductionist conception of power in which communication could play a central role.

For Habermas, discerning a comprehensive concept of power is something crucial that follows from the pressuring demands for distinguishing systematically between the (illegitimate) social powers of the administrative bureaucracy and the market, on the one hand, and the (legitimate) power generated communicatively by citizens, on the other hand, in the postwar era of technocratic politics and new social movements. Accordingly, Habermas (1985 *Profiles*) takes up Arendt's difference between power and violence, which leads to the idea of power as "the human ability not just to act but to act in concert" (1970, 44). As Hannah Pitkin (1972) remarked, this definition implicates a capability, potential, or ability that is very important for Habermas to open the colorfulness of power overshadowed by strategic views of it. Based on this, Habermas can make a difference between functionalistic conceptions of power, which he still applies and finds productive in his social theory to understand how systems reproduce and create problems for social integration, and a communicative conception of power, that can be attained as a paradigmatic idea for human capacity to produce legitimate norms and institutions.

Additionally, the concept of action that is part of Arendt's political philosophy provides a remarkable basis for asserting an idea of collective action in which freedom, plurality, and speech are coupled in an unprecedented way. For Habermas (1980 *German-Jewish*), Arendt (1958) discloses an understanding of action that goes beyond instrumental reasoning and provides the most fertile terrain to defend a participatory view of what distinguishes the realization of human capacities to act. Hence, this makes human action

essentially productive for freedom and Habermas reads that such is only possible through the interaction and discourse by the actors implicated in a mutual collective project that upholds their differences in plurality. For a political theory attentive to Arendt's notion of action, human interaction produces a power capable of founding norms and institutions; it is a legitimizing trend of the form of life in which one exists.

Lastly, it is also the very notion of politics linked to power and action, but, more specifically, to the idea of the public space as a realm of appearance in which the legitimacy of institutions arises, articulating the importance of Arendt's thought. Arendt (*On Revolution*) offers a source of political normativity that coherently includes the notions of power, action, and speech to an account of political freedom. Although idealist -as Habermas (1985; 1996) himself confronts-, her idea of politics implies transformations of the given historicity defining the societal bondages of the subjects. Action in concert is, therefore, possible on the basis of a free an open realm of interaction, politics is the space in which political freedom is realized by means of the production of a common power that "springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse" (1958 p. 200). On this basis, the idea of political freedom, which Arendt remarkably articulates against what she considers the two main political European traditions of liberalism and socialism (Arendt 2006), makes a remarkable model of active citizenship in which politics is unmistakably affirmed as a process of coming together to act in concert by shaping -as Passerin d'Entrèves (1994) and Canovan (1992) suggest- a non-durable, non-stable and non-natural common interests or collective identity.

All in all, those features are linked to the centrality of Habermas's conception of deliberative politics and, mostly, show the importance of Arendt's thought for a critical idea of citizenship. However, in a closer reference to Habermas' work, departing from the intersubjective and dialogical premises of communicative reason, the ideas of power, action, and politics unfold certain differences and contrasting nuances of great importance for a contemporary approach to the idea of citizenship that acknowledges a greater tone of normative determinacy and sociological dependency. As Margaret Canovan (1983) indeed

suggest, Habermas considerably alters and unrecognizes the relation of his ideas with the Arendtian because despite of acknowledging her original work his aim at a far different target and departs from quite competing presuppositions⁷².

Communicative power

Accordingly, Habermas' differences with the above-mentioned ideas dispensed by Hannah Arendt form the core nucleus of one of his most valuable and rich political concepts: *Communicative power*. Habermas' view of the power that derives from the human capacity to act in concert appreciates the possibility of generating a common will as a legitimizing process of norms and institutions, but it also claims that under Arendtian premises this link between human interaction and institutional politics has been too quickly established. The power of communication under intersubjective and dialogical premises includes *another track* -of the two that Jeffrey Flynn (2004) characterizes- in which the normative implications aimed *not only* to the legitimization of political institutions or administrative politics, but also and autonomously to the function of *power-dissolving* –as Barreyro (2018) claims-. The normativity of the power of communication, therefore, is not only primary concerned with such legitimizing tasks remarked by Arendt, and, moreover, its conceptualization tends to include, departing from Habermasian assumptions, the difficult entanglements with the contending forces of the functional structures -as it is emphasize by the systems theorists of power- and the effects -as explained by Foucault- that opposes to the individual actors in interactions.

Furthermore, the power in communication, that in Habermas' reading of Arendt finds the pathways to be seen as a mechanism of consensus formation throughout the “shared believes” “produced discursively and intersubjectively” (Habermas, 1996, p. 116), in fact, possesses a preceding remarkable “motivating force” that escapes to the subject-centered metaphysics overlying Arendt's concept of action. Habermas' submits his views on power

⁷² Habermas himself states: “I have learned from H. Arendt how to approach a theory of communicative action; what I cannot see, is that this approach should be in contradiction to a critical theory of society”. (1980 p. 128-129)

-both normative and sociological- to the broader picture of a theory of social action informed by a communicative paradigm of rationality. On this basis, communication performs the capacity to coordinate actions by means of a process of mutual understanding guided by giving and receiving reasons in open processes of justification. Actions take place in daily life within social contexts that symbolically mediate the interactions, and in which one is involved as much as one has to be confronted to “coping with situations” (Habermas, *Remarks on Seattle*) and encountered to “resolve difficulties or to solve problems” (Habermas, *Remarks on Seattle*) operated in the form of speech acts that carry out with validity claims.

In that sense, Habermas (1996, p. 315) claims to call communicative power the “sociological translation of the concept of deliberative politics” and, thus, he emphasizes the binding force it possesses for “the formation of a common will in communication directed to reaching agreement” (Habermas 1985 p. 4) that Arendt could have been disclosed but not correspondingly developed. Acknowledging that the sociohistorical elements of analysis expand the problem of action and disseminate the understanding of power, Habermas’s conception of communicative power illuminates at once on the political-normative aspirations implicated in the nature of communication and the social-practical burdens of social powers entwined in its realization. The entanglement of validity and power, then, makes the horizon of actions that, through processes of argumentative deliberation, spin around the possibility of disclosing, liberating, and developing the motivating force that can lead to the justification of a common will formed such very same processes.

That is, accordingly, a more complex internal view of the political action that reflects in the meaning of public deliberations that produce a common will formation inasmuch as, first, the normativity of power is ascribed at a more wide-ranging scale that enlightens the importance that validity of communications carries out in daily interactions in connection with its very fundamental dimension of motivating the citizens engagement in processes of argumentation; and, second, the non-instrumentality model of action is grounded on social-philosophical premises that assert the function of action coordinating by means of process of understanding occurring immanently to the socio-historical burdens that mediate the contexts

of practical interactions. Habermas questions Arendt's idea of the public space of politics as wherein power "springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse" (1958 p. 200) precisely because of not clearly upholding the full range of political-normative significance it can pose when begin posed counterfactually in the social dimensions of life. Following such a reading of Habermas's works, the freedom that could be made from the process of making communicative power is one that is measured by overcoming the blockages induced by external powers to the process of common will formation. Accordingly, the politics of citizens capable of making communicative power is one of also surpassing such burdens posed in social interactions.

Communicative power, thus, as the central concept that explains both normatively and sociologically what becomes implicated in the actions of politically autonomous citizens, suggests a type of practice that takes place not only outside of the political system, but also, more fundamentally and *radically* in the informal social contexts wherein the "anarchistic core of communication present in daily interaction" (Habermas, 1996 p. 116). Accordingly, Throughout the time of the last three decades and in the context of neoliberal incarceration of the Constitutional State, the attention given to the process of *producing* institutional-democratic legitimacy has moved to the scrutiny of the processes of *making* the communicative political power at its most informal, deregulated, and anarchistic flows in which "motivating forces" are in motion throughout "discursively produced and intersubjectively shared beliefs" (Habermas 1996 p. 147). A growing secondary literature (Flynn 2004; Günther 1998; Barreyro 2018; Kreide 2015a; Bohman 1996a; O'Mahony 2010; Allen 2012; Cooke 1994) and Habermas (2008; 2006; 1998) himself orients this *radical turn* in the politics of (deliberative) communication. Accordingly, the emphasis now considers that "all political power derives from the communicative power of citizens" (Habermas 1996, p. 170). This emphasis facilitates a radical view of the politics of citizenship established directly in the tension between social powers and communicative power and a critical theory of the contemporary sociopolitical relations that diagnoses the practical blockages of making communicative power⁷³. Acknowledging the practical-political problems of the exercise of

⁷³ Allen (2012) and Gregoratto (2015) have remarked the relevance and subdevelopment of these opened paths.

citizenship in a neoliberal age characterized by the erosion of democratic political institutions (Brown 2015; Balibar 2015; Santos 2007) and the colonization of the subjective dimension of the self by the affirmation of capital values and precarization of productive life (Brown 2015) along with the difficulties of setting the normative standards of critical sociology without submitting strong idealizations, transcendental idealisms or foundational premises the inquiry into the processes of *making* political communicative power is the adequate path to follow.

IV. Citizenship without autonomy. The deliberative blockage of interactions in the age of political crisis.

Our times are pressing in a wide variety of issues without the vehicles of a political world capable of producing long-term promising, generalized, institutionalized and common senses about what should be done regarding ecological crises, war crises, and migration crises, among others. Let me now suggest that our times of crisis can be scrutinized by focusing on the political practices of citizens across the world. Our times are primarily composed of systematic crises characterized by an intense process of delegitimizing democratic values, institutions, and systems. These are all signals -for the case of my argument- of a deep-sated crisis of the *political capacities* of the contemporary subject for making consensuses about what must be done with the structural problems we are facing. As mentioned, autocratic powers *within* liberal governments (Mechkova, Lührmann & Lindberg 2019), authoritarian groups *within* pluralistic societies (Levitsky y Ziblatt 2019) and severe social inequalities *within* social-democratic constitutional regimes (Mounk 2018) have increasingly flourished in the last decades. Democratic institutions and participatory forms of political agencies have been exposed to an intensified displacement from the practical dynamics of social life (Brown, 2015; Fraser, 2018). Accordingly, there are influences widely reaching the social

horizon of the lifeworld, pressuring citizens to be disconnected from their political activities in democratic-based liberal-political systems⁷⁴.

Streeck (2014) famously labeled our times as an age driven by the TINA -There Is No Alternative- politics for representing the disconnection, the short-reaching and the reactionary interactions taking place in our contemporary political realm. Feelings of anger, perceptions of delusion and drives of impulsivity mediate the encounters among citizens; their opinions and imaginary representations of common issues, and their willingness to participate in decision-making processes are the contemporary basis for interactions among them. In the political literature and common political jargon, such a historical situation is commonly expressed in terms of polarization without -precisely- *filters* of common reasonability, shared discursive basis, and mutually recognized institutions capable of mediating the interactions taking place today in physical and virtual spaces. Let me portray the outcome of this situation in the image of a political landscape in which the unfiltered claims -contending *desires, interests* and *needs*- stem from enclosed, unquestioned and undisputed representations of the good life upheld by the citizens. The burdens of common understanding, rational deliberation, and institutionalized normative expectations would ideally provide sufficient filters for stabilizing the claims portrayed today with anger, delusions, and impulsivity. But precisely the unavailability of those sources explains the aggressive polarization characterizing our contemporary political landscape.

Accordingly, the lack of far-reaching consensuses, the absence of common shared political values and the unavailability of the normative bases mediating interactions feature a historical context of blocked political interactions. These driving forces represent the proliferation of collective actions performed by social movements either from the right or the left. In normative political terms, there are severe problems in differentiating the democratic legitimacy of regressive and progressive political claims. All social movements claim desires, interests and needs in their own representations of the good against the given socio-historical complexity. Their claims include a sense of moral expectations that support a positioning in the political sphere, provide an impulse for action, and motivate a strategic

⁷⁴ See, Gallo & Jurado (2020).

goal: the fire is heading to a fever pitch. All social movements recognize their necessity for a context-transcending kind of fighting, a kind of thinking and a kind of counterfactual feeling. They all claim to establish themselves for a cause that faces economic, cultural, or political circumstances in favor of a better world against the one that affects them. This contemporary logic of mere contestation does not provide a further differentiation because the political claims are not only particularistic, as it used to be thought several decades ago in the social movement's critical theory, but -in most cases- the problem lies in that the *type* and *quality* of contestation they perform is enclosed, self-referential and unreflective regarding the one-dimensionality of the arguments employed in front of the related social crises, the unilaterality of the actions proposed opposing to the existing alterity of discursive positions and the immediacy of the solutions disclosed regarding the complexity of the problems that political movements faced.

There is an explanation here for the logic governing the collective performances of different social movements for problems linked to the perceived environmental changes, geopolitical conflicts, and other social challenges such as migration; and, at the same time, there lies the normative criterion for differentiating the social movements in accordance with the type and quality of the arguments performed in their political claims. In contrast with the enclosure, the self-referentiality and the lack of reflectivity of the claims, there must be a normative basis to support those political movement's claims that motive and develop disclosure, deliberation and critical transcendence in political interactions. Thus, there must be a focus on the arguments employed by social movements to grasp both the blockages of the contemporary political landscape and normatively differentiate the political claims at stake. The agendas of contemporary social movements are plagued with claims that could be perceived in the creativity, accuracy and influence of the discursive messages performed in traditional media, street protests and social networks. Focusing on those tags, there is a type and quality of the political claims they seek to ensure in their agendas.

Thereupon, there is a great variety of claims performed by social and political movements but, as mentioned, they represent the good linked to a fragment of the lifeworld graspable as an interpretation of their necessities.

“Ni una Menos” Mobilization 2015 – Latin America
Feminist Social Movement



#NiUnaMenos

“¡Ni Una Menos! ¡Vivas, libres y desendeudadas nos queremos!”

“Not One Woman Less! Free, Alive and Un-
indebted We Want Us!”



In Latin America, the feminist social movement “Ni una menos” displays a great example of the kind of contemporary politics that fulfills the concept of citizenship reconstructed up to this point. In addition, it also reflects problems faced by the political claims contended in an agenda from the left progressist side in the political spectrum. The feminist movement, especially in Argentina, is widely recognized for its confrontation with gender violence at different scales and spaces of the social order of production and reproduction. By promoting a collective performance of acting together, “Ni una menos” has raised the enhancement of the scope of recognition of gender aggressions against women and demanded the reform of institutions capable of securing such recognition to the stage of recently passing the law through the Argentinian congress that protects the legal right to abortion. In this sense, the dual logics of *conflicts* -steered by the conditions of the given social order- and *rights* -realizing by formalizing and warranting the claims- correspond to a great example of what the acts of citizenship -reflecting political autonomy- imply for contemporary politics, as mentioned before in this work.

Moreover, the repertoires of collective action performed by the social movement is attuned with a contemporary dynamic of political contestation that highly relies on communication, discursivity, rhetoric and representational symbolism as components of a sphere of disputation that in politics must not be overlooked. Tags, songs, compound messages, and logos are included in the greatly impactful struggles and conflicts proposed by the feminist movement. The claims in its agenda of performative and discursive politics expressed a representation of needs, desires and interests by virtue of a politics of interpretation of the given sociohistorical order of domination. In this sense, the feminist social movement confronts a great variety of problems, among which it has proven great success as a force of disclosure and a guide for politics against gender domination, but, in the context of Latin American Neoliberalism -as Veronica Gago (2015) suggests- the struggle needs to go further at confronting the damaging effects of the economic systems on social reproduction. At the point of counterbalancing the destructiveness of financial debt on communitarian life, the social movement is facing new challenges linked to the reform, defense, and clarification of care work against neoliberalism. These are the real problems that the defense of political autonomy by the Latin American Feminist movement encounters today. Thus, the current claims raised by Latin American social movement linked to the organization of the popular economy that is at the basis of the communal life, processes of decision making and interactions face new forms of blocking and contestation.

The Tag “No one less! Free, Alive and Un-indebted we want us” synthesizes the path towards citizenship politics at a new level of the boundary struggle that motivates -by disclosing and guiding- the deliberation over a sphere of autonomy that is currently threatened by the colonizing waves of Latin American Neoliberalism. By making this boundary politics something as a tactic of the struggle, “Ni una menos” reflects a new practice of citizenship politics that upholds an ongoing practice of disclosing and guiding the problems that currently block the exercise of political autonomy against gender domination in the age of crisis induced by neoliberalism. “Ni una menos” is a great example of the struggle for rights and conflicts over autonomy that a progressist agenda can appreciate, but by no means does its achievements imply that its experience reflects a way out of the structural curtailing effects

on political autonomy that neoliberalism produces. The end of 2023 in Argentina has brought an important moment for the struggle of the claims of the feminist movement and others with the election of the neoliberal anarcho-capitalist Javier Milei as President of the Latin American country. Milei threatens to dismantle all social entitlements and provisions, privatize all public company services and confront as much as interests grounded in society that curtail the establishment of a logic of the market guided by an extreme deregulation. “Ni una menos” has responded from day one without hesitation with mobilizations along with other progressist social agents under the generalized mottos of “an attack on all rights” and “that there is a profound degradation of the institutions”⁷⁵ under Milei’s government; but, the clear claim against the blatant neoliberal governmentality on power is yet to be produced beyond the interpretation of the necessities from the women’s standpoint.

At the levels of cultural, economic and political integration of the lifeworld, there are significant challenges ahead to confront against the patriarchal mindset, the financialized system of debt and the lack of political representation of their real needs within the political system. In accordance with the damaging effects of neoliberalism, the political struggle of the feminist social movement is capable of displaying a great source of deliberative politics by disclosing and guiding the identification of the problems, but beyond this stage of mere contestation and opposition to the neoliberal-capitalist social order the shared consensus and transformative outcomes are yet to be seen. Nevertheless, it is worth saying and insisting that the contestation promoted by the feminist social movement implicates a great source for deliberation inasmuch as it motivates -by disclosing and guiding- the struggles that steered political dynamism in contemporary societies. Accordingly, it is an expression of what any politics of citizenship must face in the actual times characterized by the lack of shared values, consensus and legitimized institutions. The claims motivating deliberation that are contended in the political agenda of the feminist can be judged by the reasonability implicated in the type and quality of the arguments performed; such reasonability depends on how much justificatory process they can produce in a public sphere of deliberation amongst others political agents; but it is a fact that, as any other contemporary social

⁷⁵ <https://elpais.com/argentina/2023-09-29/el-feminismo-argentino-se-moviliza-contra-javier-milei.html>

movement representing its desires, needs and interests by claiming its own sense of the good (by means of what should be the right thing to do), the claims found themselves condemned to be enclosed in the particularity of the need, the self-referentiality of the reasons and the simplification of the object of criticism. Evidently, this is not an ontology that makes a faulty social movement by constitution, but it is a historical condition that defines the point of departure for the practical and theory of politics.

All contemporary social movements are condemned to those logics of the enclosure of their interest, the self-referentiality, and the simplification of the object towards the claims are directed. The feminist movement is not exempted from that logic at first sight. This is a point of departure from any political claim from the left or the right today. The rights and conflicts over autonomy that would implicate an emancipatory exercise of the politics of citizenship must be judged beyond that point by the measure of how much justification they offer to support their claims. Following the premises of communicative action and deliberative politics mentioned above and contended in the *system of rights*, the claims displayed by a social movement can be normatively enquired -therefore legitimate differentiated- beyond the context-dependence of desires, needs and interests to which the claim is related by virtue of the process of collective will it can generate. In accordance with the principle of self-legislation that informs the idea of political autonomy, a legitimate process of collective will formation implies the force transcendence of a universal aspiration and the inclusion of other perspectives and actors. Before this point of contemporary normativity, there are no reliable distinctions between the varieties to be found in the political landscape.

A look at other scenarios of contestation from the left and right can provide enough support for this basic argument that contemporary politics moves at the level of mere opposition, simple contestation and radical antagonism and, therefore, the premises of political autonomy capable of offering a criteria for differentiating the claims must be placed beyond the mere logics of contestation, in the process of justification beyond the context-dependency of the claims. These objective difficulties are not impediments, I insist, for remarking the problems or crises of our times; they are obstacles for producing -on the run- enough tracking force within a justificatory process that legitimizes their claims by the virtues of deliberation

coupling the making of shared values and the transformation of common institutional bases. There is a clear example of this in the situation of the recent context of Colombia's National Strike of 2021, in which a general strike guided by almost three months of ongoing and permanent mobilization on streets and social networks impeded the enactment of one of the most regressive tax reforms happening in recent Colombia's history and made visible the intolerable context of the mafia's violence countenanced by the right-wing government of the former President Ivan Duque against social leaders and progressists agendas across the country.



Colombia's Great National Strike of 2021 –
Days of mobilization against the State's
Violence and Repression against Protesters
–mostly Students–

#SOSNosEstánMatando

#SOSWeAreBeingKilled



During the months of mobilizations, the government delegitimized the street protesters and denied the claims while it employed the use of brutal military and police violence to repress⁷⁶. The struggle ended up calling for a plea against such violence in an unprecedented disclosure of the repressive practices of the government in favor of elite groups, corporative class interests and right-wing regressive ideologies that reached international attention⁷⁷. The tag “SOSWeAreBeingKilled” branded a campaign of struggle against different causes: the social inequalities aggravated by the crises of Covid-19, the agenda of ignoring the structural

⁷⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/jun/09/colombia-protesters-inequality-police>

⁷⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/repression-in-the-spotlight/>

problems linked to the protracted armed conflict in rural areas supported by the government, the political crisis steered by scandals of corruption and the infiltration of mafia's cartels at different levels of society, among others. The disclosure of this by the logic of the National Strike remarkably framed the national agendas in the elections of 2022, which ended up in the election of the first left-wing progressist President in the country's entire history with Gustavo Petro.

However, the transformative agenda that motivated the historical context of protest lost track of the implications of institutionalizing the claims in the personal figure of the new official President. The citizens' expectations that guided the dynamism and inclusiveness of the previous wave of mobilizations took the detour of simplification in the figure of leadership of President Petro and the hopes of change clashed with the intricate obstacles that the enclosed, rigid and elitist bureaucratized political system of Colombian prefigures for any emancipatory agenda. The initiatives of change promoted by the new President have encountered all the blockages of the class interests, partialized media and regressive values that are grounded at the structural basis of a country served by the imperatives of extractive capitalism, the coloniality of culture supporting racial exclusion and the non-participatory democracy that curtails popular sovereignty in favor of an elitist political system based on representation.

Like other Latin American countries, Colombia has a very active performance of social movements that protest in favor of different claims to social equality, cultural inclusion and political recognition. Students, indigenous populations, peasants and guilds are the common actors that frequently perform against state policies that curtail the legal rights and social policy to education, protection of identity and other positive liberties. All those political actors have traditionally employed political strategies on the streets, sometimes blocking roads, painting walls and assets, walking on the streets and intruding on private property (Archila 2018). Until recently, those social actors have frequently developed joint agendas and have employed remarkable discursive strategies to frame common interests, appeal to the solidarity of the common citizens and invite other political actors to add to their concrete agendas (Cruz 2017). Edwin Cruz (2017) has analyzed the rhetoric strategies that follow up

such an actual agenda of performance politics of disclosure and articulation in Colombia with a remarkable result of pointing out the importance of the joy to be found in the songs and performances of students and the creativity of indigenous and others in making tags, sentences and jargon expressions that signals their claims with a meaningful content of their claims.

Colombia's Agrarian National Strike of 2013



“Todos somos hijos del café” – Caficultores

“We are all children of Coffee” – Coffee farmers

Indigenous mobilizations against systematic violence in Colombia - 2020



“si nos quedamos callados, nos matan. Y si hablamos, también. Entonces, ¡hablamos!” – CRIC – Indigenous Movement of the South of Colombia

“If we keep quiet, they kill us. And if we speak, too. So, let's talk!” – CRIC – Indigenous Movement of the South of Colombia

The claims of these political movements have proven to be effective at nurturing the agendas of contestation by disclosing and guiding the needs, interests and desires of the citizens involved in common contemporary conflicts linked to the defense of land, the protection of rights and the recognition of identity. Remarkably, for instance, Colombian Coffee Farmers managed to call attention and legitimize their claims in a famous Agrarian National Strike in 2013 with the very appealing tag “We all are children of Coffee” as the slogan to complaint against the lack of support of the government in a situation in which the international price of the coffee was paid too low, and the families of the peasants involved in the production of coffee were impoverished by the logic of the Market⁷⁸. Their protests began as a petition of a temporal subsidy for the coffee farmers that the government neglected because of the lack of responsibility for the given status of the international prices. Passing the days, the unattended complaint led the farmers to block national roads and call the attention of other actors, such as the potato farmers and truck drivers, frequently affected by the fluctuation of inputs and oil prices depending on the international market⁷⁹. After weeks of rhetorical confrontation between the State trying to delegitimize the agrarian strike by neglecting it and denouncing infiltrations of armed groups and the protesters joining under the slogan “We are all children of Coffee”, the government of the by the time President Juan Manuel Santos negotiated a partial agreement with a few of the protesters that created a disarticulation of the movement and the end of the Agrarian National Strike (Cruz 2013).

Similarly, the indigenous population have traditionally taken part in an active production of collective actions in Colombia -as in Latin America-. Among the strongest indigenous social movements, The Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca -CRIC- allocated in the South of the country possesses a platform of struggle for the defense of political autonomy, the defense of the ancestral land, the protection of traditional culture and the promotion of unity amongst indigenous people. For seventy years, it has been characterized as one of the most successful social actors at taking advantage of the opportunities and mobilizing resources against the territorializing dynamics of extractivist foreign capital, direct and symbolic violence of

⁷⁸ https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2013/09/130902_colombia_paro_agrario

⁷⁹ https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2013/12/131206_grandes_historias_2013_colombia_paro_agrario_aw

armed actors and the State and cultural racism of the mestizo hegemony coming of the urban centers of the country (Jurado, Ruiz & Castaño 2023; Laurent 2022). The indigenous social movement is very well known for the diversification of its repertoires of collective action and specially for using institutional mechanisms and resources provided by the constitutional rights of multiculturalism enacted in 1991. Commonly framing their claims within the scope of the rights to their cultural autonomy, they have been able to recover the land from which they were displaced from the times of the colonial conquest of the Spanish Kingdom, they have received money from the State and international organizations for managing their organization and they have legally created a political party with the chance of having permanent representation in the legislative branch. Similarly, they are recognized by using the common Spanish national language that appears in their own media resources and the public appearances of their representatives to communicate their claims, by establishing a permanent agenda of protests against old non-compliances of the State and by articulating with other social actors to claim for a particular cause that includes in it their vision or interest.

As can be seen, these social actors' agendas are active and possess the relative success of achieving general visibility and even the state's recognition of their claims in contingent pressing contexts. However, they all have also evidenced to be limited at sustaining the impact of the recognition of their claims beyond the scope of visibility of the legal and bureaucratic mechanisms of the state means in order to produce such recognition within the grammars of the socially institutionalized community, they have proven to be short at impacting the effects of the successes of their struggles in the structural roots of the problems allocated in the economic basis, grounded in the cultural repression of either the patriarchal society or the racist stratified societies and imbued in the political systems characterized by the extended colonial gap of representation between the citizens and their politicians. Let me here suggest that the problems of enclosure, self-referentiality and the lack of reflectivity, even in these cases of progressist reform driven by left-wing social movements, are due to the blockages of political autonomy induced by the neoliberal historical form of capitalism. The explanation for this phenomenon is yet to be drawn in the second part of this dissertation.

However, from a critical perspective of the political landscape in the contemporary age of crises, the claims of citizenship have difficulties surpassing the levels of legal recognition, statal provisions, contingent remedies and partial fulfillment of the needs.

Contemporary claims of social and political actors certainly portray any of the core elements of the double-edge nucleus of citizenship -sometimes several-, but, commonly, not all of them at once. I remark on the importance of the theoretical reconstruction of the concept of citizenship elaborated before. The claims of contemporary social and political actors might propose necessary social conflicts and even achieve an entitlement to a legal right or provision; political contestation can produce effects at this formal-institutionalized level of the lifeworld. Nevertheless, the claims lack a justificatory tracking force for impacting the dimensions of social recognition and the structures of social reproduction allocated outside of the bureaucratized system of the state so that in Family, Schools, Media, and Social networks); political antagonism does not reach the level of informal non-institutionalized spheres of the lifeworld⁸⁰. Thus, the typical claims included in the political agendas of contemporary actors, even in the best cases of a progressist view, lack the realization of the contemporary highest standard of the normative content of citizenship as political autonomy.

In order to fulfill this as the path towards the development of citizenship politics out of the age of crises, let me argue that political claims need to include the upheld agenda of *deliberative politics of the representations of the good life*⁸¹ in the old classical recipe of the *double agenda of social movements* formulated by Arato and Cohen (1994) three decades ago. Such implies a politics of making communicative power capable of generating a context-transcendence force that is essentially inked to processes of public argumentation and justification oriented by the dogmatic core of the system of citizenship rights under the premises of communicative action. Leaving unattended the full realization of the political autonomy included in the normative idea of contemporary citizenship induce the claims to be restricted to the generation of effects that could trigger antagonism and some recognition

⁸⁰ See page 118 for the visual contrasts with the reconstructed double-edged nucleus concept of citizenship as political autonomy.

⁸¹ See the final part of the last chapter for the discussion of this.

of their needs, interests and desire, but that also confines their agendas to a blocked process of communication that threatens to prolong the age of crises in which we live by virtue of the lack of generation of new shared values, new common senses and new political consensuses.

The most dramatic example of what happens in today's politics by virtue of agendas performed by social movements that uphold mere opposition and contestation to the given status quo, leaving aside the normative content of citizenship as political autonomy, is reflected in the claims coming from the right-wing and far-right political spectrum. There are also strong claims from social movements that interpret the necessities of many people across the globe, making accessible to the immediate experiences of the individual's desires, interests and needs the realm of the politics of contestation and antagonism. These are claims in which the type of quality of the arguments included in their agendas differ from others, but by no means -as mentioned- are they different from the form by which they disclosed reality and proposed social conflicts. Indeed, the quality of the claims is defined by a profitable enclosure, self-referentiality, and lack of reflectivity that provides a high efficacy of connecting with the simple expectations of contestation and opposition of many citizens. Without appealing to the filters and burdens of practical argumentation and justification, those claims easily divide the political positions into mere antagonism, offer immediate sensible certainty and simplify the causes of the problems involved.

Assault to the US Capitol



Attack to the Congress of Brazil by Bolsonaro's supporters



Covid-19 Vaccine Protest Based on Conspiracy Theories



Slogans of steal of elections supporting boycotts against the political settings, violent intrusions calling for undemocratic means for underpinning legitimate procedures and advocacy for irreflective explanations undermining the deep comprehension of common

problems are frequent patterns of the agendas mobilizing millions of citizens across the world in a politics of mere opposition and reactionary action. The claims included in these agendas of regressive, reactionary, authoritarian politics are by definition, not different from the other progressist ones. They content an interpretation of needs, interests, and desires that is graspable by their participants' senses by an interpretation of the necessities that discloses the existence of a problem allocated to the given socio-historical status. Accordingly, we will not get further in normative political and social theory by discrediting the performances of those agendas at first sight with a pure transcendental criterion and without detecting the concrete moment in which the process of performing the claims they blocked in a special manner the course of interactions. Let me, then, argue that the reactionary demands of Trumpist supporters against the unproven legitimacy of the steal of elections that led to the assault of the US Capitol is not more problematic because of the enclosure of their ideas of what happened in the loss of the election, neither for the self-referentiality ascribed to the unquestioned dangerous speech of their populist leader nor for the lack reflectivity of the supporters of the assault. These conditions do not underlie the differences with what could be more legitimate claims, demands or actions since the progresist's claims could also suffer from the fortunes of these blockages and not get further enough at producing a common political will, new shared values or a meaningful transformation of the status quo considered in their necessities.

It must be recognized that the lack of realization of political autonomy is a socio-historical condition that underlies all citizens' acts, performances and claims in the era of neoliberalism. Then, the only way that could get us forward analyzing, criticizing, and qualifying the politics of mere antagonist contestation and opposition is the reconstruction of normative criteria that provides the standards of improvement of the type of quality of the claims displayed by the how much justificatory process of deliberations they can disclose, guide and sustain up the level of institutional transformation passing through the filters and burdens of public communicative argumentation. This is, therefore, a propaedeutic predicament for a realist view of today's politics that includes a vision in which any political claim performed must be considered in accordance with the state of fact that provides for the disclosure of a human

necessity that contingently might have the misfortune of not being processed by the channels of communicative interaction because of the objective pressures installed by our capitalist form of life. Similarly, an agenda of critical theory and practice of politics must look for the stances of disqualification, overburden, obfuscation and deformation of those chances to be heard and speak that uphold the only chances for finding the solutions to the problems. It is evident that the agendas of right-wing and far-right political movements also include some of the features of the double-edged conceptual nucleus of citizenship, and they are as such normal practices of contemporary citizenship. They propose conflicts and claim any rights to have whatever they interpret as adequate for the raw necessity on which they frame their claims. But, here also, the scope of ethical recognition by others is very narrow and does not reflect a clear-cut consciousness of the social complexity that shapes their necessities. Accordingly, they also suffered from performing their political capacities as citizens with normative political autonomy and self-legislation standards that create a common political will for making sustainable and legitimate transformations.

In the age of different crises that reflect in the political realm, it is very difficult to differentiate amongst the political claims that shape the agendas of contestation and opposition. As mentioned, the most problematic side of this is that with such a socio-historical condition defining politics, there cannot be a consensus for producing solutions based on common interests, shared values, and sustainable legitimate agendas. But how can we explain the causes of this historical condition? How are we to find sources of hope for such a difficult situation? How are we to envision possible solutions for these theoretical and practical problems? In what follows, I embark on the design of the basic abstract contours of the answers to these questions by suggesting two main things: first, the lack of realization of political autonomy of contemporary political claims is due to the objective dynamics of our neoliberal historical form of capitalism that produces a phenomenon of depoliticization of social interactions that curtail the communicative capacities of citizens for making common power for change; second, that the criteria to differentiate and qualified the political claims and that could implicate certain ways out to the problematic scenario can be found in the detailed analysis of the type and quality of the political representations of that move the

citizens to engage in deliberations. Let me add that by the type and quality of political representations, I mean the scope of the justificatory process that the interpretation of a necessity contended in a political claim could disclose and guide in publicly communicative moments or argumentation. Therefore, what could differentiate a claim of any political movement from any other in a legitimate fashion is how much inclusive, generalized, and sustained deliberation it can provide about a matter in our contemporary times.

PART II – SOCIAL CRITIQUE AND COMMUNICATION

Chapter III - Depoliticization of Citizenship: A Critical Inquiry into the Contemporary Social Interactions

The political content of an idea of citizenship reflected in the modern attributes of an autonomous, self-determined and self-reflective subjectivity has suffered a gradual depletion since its theoretical disclosure by the critical tradition of modernity inspired by Kant, Marx, and Hegel. The implicated idea that the realization of modern political freedom could be reflected in the normative stances of the public use of reason, the ethical reconciliation portrayed in the idea of the state, and the revolutionary transformation of capitalism faced - all together- a process of regression driven by a structural transformation of the relations between the *State* and the *Market*. Such structural transformation of society -as a whole- since the end of the nineteenth century up to today has gradually reshaped those relations established since the regime of *Liberal competitive capitalism*⁸² by virtue of a dynamic mutual interpenetration of their functions. Ever since it has been impossible to speak about the realms of the Market and State as two separate realms.

Accordingly, the conflicts engendered by the related contradictions within two subsequent new historical forms of capitalism (the *State-managed capitalism* and the *financialized neoliberal capitalism*) after the nineteenth century are seen as part of a complex web of institutional mediations that commonly submit the political struggles to the controls imposed by the marketized interests of capital accumulation and deactivation mechanism induced by the generalized principles promoted by the public administration of the State. The outcomes affecting the emergence of social conflicts and political struggles began under the tendencies of gradual interventionism embraced by governments across the globe and the increase of the private interest's capacity to influence the sphere of public and administrative

⁸² I rely on the historization of the regimes of capital accumulation reconstructed recently by Nancy Fraser (2018) as follows: *Mercantile capitalism*, *Liberal competitive capitalism*, *State-managed capitalism*, and *financialized (neoliberal, globalized) capitalism*. Several historical remarks and arguments are carried out assuming entirely this division from this point on the work.

power directly. These conditions shaped a new age of *State-managed capitalism* seen as a new historized regime of accumulation of Capitalism -as Fraser (2018) has argued- driven by new tools of crisis management, such as credit controls assured by the *Bretton woods* system, along with the expansion of social provisions characterized by a status linked to the recognition of *social citizenship*.

Strong tendencies towards the bureaucratization of social life and the normalization of a managerial mindset for the given passiveness of citizens reflected the submission of politics into a *model of mass democracy*. The index of such a situation was the increasing introduction of governmental measurements seeking to take advantage of the opportunities to negotiate class interests between capitalists and guild associations, labor movements, and political parties. Along with this, technocratic forms of legitimation enhanced their implementation during the times for securing an image of the citizen as a holder of entitles, provisions, and assistances in which the political capacities to produce a common political will by sharing and acting together could be, at least, ironically reflected. This was by no means a spontaneous process but one of an alteration of the institutional complexes and dynamics that, during the historical period of *liberal capitalism*, had given birth to the problematization of the social life driven by the separation of the economy and the state and the class contradictions breeding the political revolutions of the nineteenth century. Superseded by a more technically refined apparatus of administration and a period of wealth in the postwar era, the common long-term basis of the mass-democratic model intensified the depoliticization of citizenship to the extent that the political arena became the mere place of programmed competition, advertising, and polling of certain positions, initiatives, and features of administrative power.

As a basis of the socio-political dynamics during the last century, the mass-democratic model of legitimation also supported a form of institutional politics in the postwar era that, in contrast with the plebiscitary logics induced in Europe during the first part of the twentieth century, operated by the logics of compensatory mechanisms between the market and the state, which gradually expanded the encroachment the systems of the economy and the bureaucratic administration in the lifeworld, as a historical regime of state-managed

capitalism. Citizens became the subjects of restricted mechanisms of political interactions and the objects of predefined methods of shaping and influencing political will. The limited impact of the mechanisms of participation and the manipulative means of influencing public opinion in the mass democracies provided a façade of legitimation for the latent processes of colonization of social spaces (such as the public sphere, family, and education) and deformation of practical values through packed imperative measures of bureaucratization and marketization. The progressive loss of subjective freedom in modern society is politically expressed in the decrease of the material autonomy of citizenship: the displacement of the active role of the citizens in the political realm of decision-making and exercise of power by the administrative power in state-managed capitalism signals a gradual repression of freedom at the structural level of evolution of modern society. The result of a mass-democracy model of mere competition, advertising, and polling of certain positions, initiatives, and administrative power features indicates a tendency toward an extreme depoliticization of modern society driven by a process of repression and erosion of institutions and subjectivity.

By virtue of those means, the political sphere of common action and discourse was gradually repressed and displaced. In the legal-administrative form of the Constitutional State and the different particular versions of the Welfare State of the twentieth century, modern citizenship suffered a refeudalization by means of an increased bureaucratization of the spheres of life from which social wealth could be extracted and redistributed through compensations, and a reduction of the status of citizenship “to a client’s relationships” mediated by the management of provisions (security, services, and benefits) paternalistically was produced (Habermas 1996 p. 78). The consequences of these developments in the regime of state-managed capitalism have, following Habermas (1996), eroded “the model of a legal community that determines itself through the common practice of associated citizens” (p. 79), and promoted the domestication of the exercise of active citizenship by means of “normalization”, in Foucault's sense, that fosters the passive enjoyment of paternalistically dispensed rights” (p. 79). In this sense, as mentioned, a result of the development of the regime of state-managed capitalism was a loss of autonomy of citizenship. Thus, the political

autonomy of citizens began to suffer a specific systematic depletion since the times of state-managed capitalism that goes until the aftermath of World War II.

This chapter aims to offer a general overview of what could be attained as the process of diminishing the modern ideal of political autonomy contended in the category of citizenship in age of Neoliberal Capitalism. I seek to portray my understanding of the phenomenon by depicting an image of the current regime of accumulation that emphasizes the dual character of its structural variation and its social-reproductive effects. By virtue of this general view, I rely on the available political literature in order to claim that the most radical impact produced by the current historical form of capitalism is the depoliticization of social interactions that has deeply run the erosion of liberal-democratic values, principles and institutions across the globe underway. However, I do not intend to claim a comprehensive theory of neoliberalism. However, I intend to secure the general features that define the appropriate historical context concerning the focus of my thesis on the pathological dynamic of depoliticization of social interactions. Thus, the main goal of this chapter is to offer a critical reflection of what I understand as the social-practical phenomenon of depoliticization induced by Neoliberalism. That implicates the two other tasks I perform in the chapter regarding the reconstruction of the problem of depoliticization in the critical tradition as a social pathology that curtails freedom at the level of action and discourse and the framing of such an understanding in the specific theoretical context of the critical theory of communicative interaction depicted by Habermas.

I. Neoliberal citizenship politics. Towards a current historical diagnosis of the blockages of political autonomy.

Neoliberalism as a historical form of Capitalism

Despite the difficulties, ambiguities and contradictions that persist in the wide range of available analyses and interpretative uses of the term, neoliberalism can be considered as the label for a variety of discourses and practices that concern the relational matrix of the

State and the Market that emerged in last decades across the global world. As such, and in a generalization, neoliberalism can be -at first- grasped, following Wolfgang Streeck (2014), in a clear-cut contradistinction with the dynamics that during the times of the *Welfare State* supported certain political decisions that ambivalently moved between the rationality of achieving certain degrees of social justice -by an active role of the State- and the economic imperatives of a justice of the markets that shaped the demands, aspirations, the negotiations, and -more widely- the interactions of civil society, in which certain interests, such as unions, industrial corporations, and other economic conglomerates of the service, technology and scientific markets are generalized. As Nancy Fraser (2018) explains, the common features of the shift from the crisis of the Welfare State to the rise of Neoliberalism as a financialized regime of capital accumulation are that:

[...] the states of the core began to use public power more proactively within their own territories, to forestall or mitigate crisis. Empowered by the Bretton Woods system of capital controls, which had been established under US hegemony, they invested in infrastructure, assumed some costs of social reproduction, promoted full employment and working-class consumerism, accepted labor unions as partners in trilateral corporatist bargaining, actively steered economic development, compensated for “market failures,” and generally disciplined capital for its own good. All these efforts were aimed at securing the conditions for sustained private capital accumulation – and at pre-empting revolution. Although it stabilized things for a few decades, state-managed capitalism also ran up against its own contradictions – both economic and political. Rising wages and generalization of productivity gains combined to lower profit rates in manufacturing in the core, prompting new efforts on the part of capital to unshackle market forces from political regulation (p. 74-75).

Consequently, neoliberalism implies a few sorts of new logics within its regime of politics and economy seeking to promote capital accumulation. Such sort of new logics are reproduced with the institutional settings promoted by the structural design of administration of the form *Market/State* previously designed, but the distinguishable differences are that the means, goals and effects of the justice of the market are liberated from pressures and limits allocated in the spheres of culture, politics, and practical interaction. Accordingly, neoliberalism sustains itself from the means, goals and effects generated, expected, and

produced beyond the scales, spaces and capabilities of the current structural design of administration of the liberal form of *Market/State*, but it yet uses this form in its processes of materialization, or as Quinn Slobodian (2020) expresses, this form serves to the *encroachment* of neoliberalism in the other spheres of society.

Accordingly, Thomas Biebricher has remarkably claimed that despite the conceptual ambiguities, “the neoliberal problematic *concerns the political and social conditions of possibility for functioning markets*” (2018 p. 26). Because of this, the general design of administration (a regime of politic-cum-economy), certain procedures (linked to governmental interventions of certain areas of civil society), and mechanism (such as social policy) inherited from the *Welfare State* are in use for the encroachment of market justice imperatives in society. At the same time, neoliberalism has proven to be highly adaptable not just because the flexibilization and dynamization of the structural design of administration but, because under the masking functions of the legality and the bureaucratic-state measurements that support its regime of politic-cum-economy, interventions, and social policy, the real forces of the capitalist regime of accumulation remain decoupled from such a legal-administrative structure. The result is that the interests over accumulation portrayed in a financialized system steered by speculation over the value derived from goods and services, the promotion of growth, and acceleration through innovation compound a new totality that moves beyond the political structure of the state and directly influence and penetrate in social contexts across the globe, being compatible to a diversity of views performed by social actors. In this sense, it is that

The current regime has remade the economy/polity relation yet again. Whereas its predecessor empowered states to subordinate the short-term interests of private firms to the long-term objective of sustained accumulation, this one authorizes finance capital to discipline states and publics in the immediate interests of private investors. The dismantling of Bretton Woods, instigated by the United States, opened the way. Absent the capital controls of the previous era, states lost the ability to control their own currencies and steer their economies through deficit financing. They are now at the mercy of international lenders and bond rating agencies. Ironically, state capacity is used in this regime to construct transnational governance structures that empower capital to discipline the citizens and publics

to whom public power is supposed to be accountable! Organizations like the IMF, the WTO, and the TRIPS (trade-related intellectual property regime) now establish many of the rules of the road, globalizing and liberalizing the world economy in the interests of capital. Moreover, debt plays a major role in the governance of financialized capitalism. In this regime, it is largely through debt that capital expropriates populations in core and periphery and imposes austerity on citizens, regardless of the policy preferences they express through elections. Nevertheless, this regime, too, is highly unstable (Fraser 2018, p. 75).

The logics steering the relationship of the State and the Market are *apparently* encompassed as a common collaborative task driven by the common goal of the protection and development of individual freedom, but, in proper terms, the relation is uneven, and the State plays more preponderantly as a player that secures the political, social, cultural, and even subjective-emotional conditions of possibility for the functioning markets. In accordance with this characterization of neoliberalism as a new historical form of promoting and achieving the justice of markets by employing legitimized political and technical means in specific areas of social life for the accumulation of capital, there are certain kinds of previously unknown effects and dynamics inflicted to social relations. The structure of neoliberalism claims legitimacy on the basis of the presumed legality of constitutional regimes that keep formally unaltered the grammars of rights and the representational politics mechanisms while, at the same time, it can alter their political, cultural, and economic efficacy within the practical exercise of courts, congresses, and executive offices. This is carried out today not merely by imposing actively or subtly economic rationality into public administration structures, such as the famous work of neoliberals like James Buchanan promoted. The ways by which the efficacy of liberal-constitutional political systems is controlled emanate directly from the capacity that the actual regime of accumulation has for modeling the expectations of subjects through different dispositive of life-precarity administration -commonly privatized- in systems such as health care, the financial banking/stocking, and the productive one regulated by the imperatives of innovation in clusters that agglomerate science, technology, and entrepreneurship.

Technological advancements that created a world of virtual accessibility and attainability for things, local and global encompasses that created consumed-based cultural

interdependencies across the globe, and the production of a mass pseudo-public sphere of interactions, altogether, surpassed the material (physical and symbolical) boundaries regulated by the legal and political-representative mechanisms of the modern society. Abstractly and rhetorically, markets appear legally founded and stately preserved as constitutional regimes securing the modern foundational heritage of individual freedom. However, the true economic logics are driven from outside such juridical-political structure (not only from above the institution of the rule of law) since many of the most important forms of capital accumulation in the historical form of neoliberal capitalism, such as the emergence of new job places in the tech industry, the intensification of extractive industries, and the increase dependence on the economies of the labor of care, move freely as decoupled forces.

In that sense, neoliberalism has mainly altered the dynamics of social relations by the constant (re)demarcation of spatial human practices in new ways that combined intriguing scales of the local and the global (Harvey 2007), by altering the senses imbued in socio-cultural representations (Slobodian 2020), by ensuring a type of practical rationality as an advanced kind of governmentality (Brown 2015), and by producing new complexed forms of social reproduction in which different forms of life are disintegrated and forced to rearticulate in unprecedented and juxtaposed ways (Gago 2017). The enigmas, difficulties, and problematizations of the current historical form of capital accumulation stand on the concrete forms of the dynamic interpenetration that both levels of analytical apprehension can reveal in different spaces of the global world, the practical types and scales of the socio-cultural representations, and the damaging effects on human life.

Neoliberal depoliticizing politics

Thereupon, at the level of symbolical and material reproduction of the contemporary lifeworld, the implications and effects of neoliberalism can be suitable inquired. In the process of imposing the necessary conditions of possibility for functioning markets and installing the imperatives of the justice of markets in social institutions, cultural representations and subjective rationality, neoliberalism has dismantled democratic principles, values, and procedures. Accordingly, Streeck (2014) has proclaimed that

“democracy has been sterilized”, as a consequence of a parallel transformation of the state into the “debt state” in the age of neoliberal capitalism that diminishes its capacities of conducting the society politically since the 1970s. In a similar historical context, Crouch (2004) postulated his famous claim of *post-democracy* for signaling the encroachment of lobbies and global economic interests on political power and, therefore, explained the diminishing of democratic procedures within the operation of the State itself. Lastly, political philosophers such as Jacques Ranciere, Etienne Balibar, and Boaventura de Sousa Santos have described the historical crisis of democratic principles and institutions produced by the logic of total economization of the social in a way that does not only indicate the crisis of certain fixed or hegemonic definition of democracy but in one that indicates the crisis of the political capability of subjects in front of the institutions and practices promoted by neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism is, therefore, in true terms, a project of social (dis)order *without a ceiling and without a floor* because it curtails the classical preserving function of liberal juridical-political institutions in favor of the justice of markets and dismantles the sociocultural infrastructures of democratic legitimacy grounded in cultural pluralism, political deliberation, and collective interests. Both in theory and practice voices have been raised to indicate that what is currently labeled as the crisis of democracy around the world rests on a systemic depoliticization of the citizens as subjects with the competence for producing, executing, and legitimizing the social powers of the economy, the cultural traditions, and the political system -in a strict sense-.

The allocation of the neoliberal reason was promoted by a process of deregulation and privatization of social institutions that began in the 1970s, evolving until today’s social imperatives of valorization and monetarization of creativity, identity, and expressivity in order to profit directly from the exposition of the individuality in the deregulated market promoted by the global economy and mediated by new technologies. Following Brown (2015), the hegemony of the *Homo economicus* driven by neoliberal rationality has radically transformed the political nature of the State and the citizens for blatant administrative

governmentality and the discourse of human resources (*human capital*) appreciable by the contribution they can offer to economic growth.

Neoliberalism has altered the conditions of work and interaction throughout the precarization of productive life and the affirmation of capital values into the subjective dimension of the self (Brown, 2015; Dardot and Laval, 2017; Fisher, 2016; Lorey, 2016). Accordingly, as an idea implying the exercise of an autonomous political agency produced by the free exchange of collective identities and moral claims of autonomy (Arendt, 2005; Habermas, 1996), *citizenship* is under remarkable critical pressure in the age of neoliberalism. The precarization conducted by the economic imperatives of financialized markets and the erosion of active political agencies by the encroachment of neoliberal rationality in subjectivities produce a current historical stage of *depoliticization of citizenship*. Accordingly, Neoliberalism moves beyond a mere policy measurement promoting privatization, as it was implemented in the global south through international adjustments promoted by institutions such the International Monetary Fund, The World Bank, and the Interamerican Development Bank in the last decades of the past century. Through the incarnation of a kind of governmentality in the social sphere, a new mode of rationalization has been implanted that guides the logics of relationality within the structures of the lifeworld. This implies that strategic modes of action are the standards of regulation for normative expectations and social rules in more and more spheres and institutions of society, such as the education systems, family orientations, and personal decisions. In this sense, what distinguishes our current regime of social reproductions under neoliberalism operates deeply in and directly at the levels of cultural values, forms of interactions and personal identities. Within daily life reproduction of these realms of the neoliberal practical lifeworld, strategic modes of action are deep-cognitively-seated in a sense that premises such as self-care, goals such as self-capitalization and values such as self-empowerment.

As example, Wendy Brown explains with empirical evidence how the treatment of the function of family is understood as an enterprise that can be assessed in mere administrative terms in books like “Programming Families: How Kids Are Like Software and What the Government Could Learn From It” in *The Secrets of Happy Families* written

by Bruce Feiler⁸³. Also, the expectations of dating can be subjected to a rationality that makes its practice profitable by acknowledging the returns from the good possible investments one can assure as the ways of making sense of it. Brown exposes the work of Stella Fayman “7 Ways Finding Investors for Your Startup Is Just Like Dating” and the rhetoric of merchandize of many dating apps as a case of the incarnation of neoliberal reason in something that involves so many expectations and emotions like dating. Lastly, the examples provided on the real of health come from sports figures and influential physicians such as Reed Tuckson, who advised to “become CEO of your own health”⁸⁴. What I want to suggest with the proven of those examples is the level of cognitive penetration that the regulated administrative and statistical control of the strategic rationality reveals a new form of extreme neoliberal governmentality that shapes desires, needs and interests of the contemporary subjects at a primary level of sensitive apprehension of the world, personal expectations and immediate motivations. These conditions governing the motivations of citizens diminish the political identification of the subjects as agents that can compromise, participate and get involved with others in processes that go beyond their given individual necessities. Their political capacities are blocked from the basic stratum of forming their identities as social, communitarian and human interactive beings.

Accordingly, Wendy Brown (2015) concludes with the hopeless view that the *homo oeconomicus* has displaced the *homo politicus* in the neoliberal such a neoliberal age:

The hegemony of *homo oeconomicus* and the neoliberal “economization” of the political transform both state and citizen as both are converted, in identity and conduct, from figures of political sovereignty to figures of financialized firms. This conversion in turn effects two

⁸³ Wendy Brown summarizes: “Feiler applies the language, metrics, and techniques of business to family life. These include family decisions arranged in the fashion of a stakeholder meeting, branding one’s family, and creating a family mission statement. The Week describes it as “acknowledging that things can go wrong and introducing a system to address those things works the same in business and at home.” See <http://theweek.com/article/index/252829/the-secrets-of-happy-families>. Similarly, TED Talks describes Feiler as introducing “family practices which encourage flexibility, bottom-up idea of low, constant feedback and accountability.” See http://www.ted.com/talks/bruce_feiler_agile_programming_for_your_family.html” (p. 96).

⁸⁴ Brown offer the quote: “How do we work together to improve our quality of life? We start by assembling all available assets; engaging in best health behaviors and sharing innovations in both prevention and medical care delivery.” “Meet Dr. Reed Tuckson,” <http://www.tucksonhealthconnections.com>.

significant reorientations: on the one hand, it reorients the subject's relation to itself and its freedom. Rather than a creature of power and interest, the self becomes capital to be invested in, enhanced according to specified criteria and norms as well as available inputs. On the other hand, this conversion reorients the relationship of the state to the citizen. No longer are citizens *most importantly* constituent elements of sovereignty, members of publics, or even bearers of rights. Rather, as human capital, they may contribute to or be a drag on economic growth; they may be invested in or divested from depending on their potential for GDP enhancement (p. 108-109).

The politics of neoliberalism end up depriving citizens of the capacity to exert their means as the sovereigns of power. This consists of allocating institutional obstacles, restricting opportunities, or depriving the guaranties provided in older models of the relationship between the state and the citizens. Neoliberalism blocks citizens' interactions by colonizing their political capacities to see problems as common, general and shareable experiences that could also be processed by mutual understating. Neoliberal citizenship politics enforces enclosed, self-referential and unreflective positions that favor antagonism, immediacy and reactionary attitudes against the open, reasonable, and critical engagement regarding social problems. Accordingly, neoliberalism supports social interactions that have been submitted to a process of depoliticization of the means, goals and outcomes that human social relations can provide.

II. Depoliticization. A pathology of contemporary social interactions.

Towards a critical theory of depoliticization

Despite that clear understanding of the actual and immediate historical context of the crisis of political subjectivity under neoliberalism, the tendency towards the depoliticization of citizenship could be much earlier traced since the origins of modern society. The depoliticization of citizenship appears reflected in the reifications of the political capacity of individuals in the justifications of certain *social institutions* and *political concepts* related to the design of mechanisms of representation, the defense of rights for securing private

freedom, and the idealization of models of participation. This double and general critique is the one that appears clearly in the analysis that Marx elaborates on in *On the Jewish Question*. There, Marx reveals the real practical implications of the discourses of modern citizenship from the critical examination of the figures of the man and the citizen by contrasting the abstract political notions of the bourgeois-liberal state with the reality of selfishness, insecurity, and inequality that constitute civil society. Marx reveals that in the historical context of modernity, political alienation shows its reality in the “double life” of the “real man” who is condemned to exercise his freedom by taking a detour -in a “roundabout way”- through the “medium of the State”. The rights of man and citizen of modern political regimes are *political* emancipation, but *not* a *human* one.

The depoliticizing obstacles to accomplishing human emancipation estimated in the context of the liberal society and in the language of the young Marx were refined in the development of his work. The late writings present a more complex idea of a society driven by Capitalism in which the alienation of work -as the basic force of production and authentic source of wealth- is unjustly incorporated into the logic of the commodity exchange and accompanied by the ideological functions of science and culture as reproductive stances of Capital. In the complex dialectical analysis and multiple mediations defining Marx’s late writings the *commodity form* and the *legal form* directly shaped a negative diagnosis of the sphere of social relations driven by the egotistical character of subjects (as juridical persons) and the private legal contract (as the institution validating the circulation of commodities) produces a separation between each person from the others. On a basic level, this separation is allocated in the experiential capacity, impeding subjects from developing themselves as producers of their lives. And on a secondary level, the separation is grounded in ideological forms of social organization blocking the chances to transform social experience into a political and social force of transformation.

Marx’s dialectical critique of modern society points towards an *arcane realm* of the real social relations in which the negative effects of the alienated social order are stored, limiting the practical and radical exercise of the political autonomy that the modern principle of subjectivity had opened up. This problem, related to the *form* of modern political and

social institutions, reaches the contemporary theorists linked to the tradition of Critical Theory in the image of a repressed, reified, and forgotten dimension that should be transformed into the theoretical and practical impulse of a critical social philosophy dedicated to the unveiling of the historical state of things of such a repressed practical dimension. In this sense, I claim to consider here that, first, the expression of a repressed dimension of politics that can be located in the unfulfilled promise of the exercise of political autonomy for poor, culturally marginalized, and institutionally oppressed social groups leads to a critical reflection of the idea of citizenship, and, second, that the effects of the repression inflicted to political autonomy can be labeled as a pathological social phenomenon of depoliticization overlying the modern society.

On the social pathology of depoliticization

In the tradition of critical theory, the phenomenon of depoliticization could be implicated in a kind of practical dimension linked to the repression of the capacity to decide on questions that affect the forms of life. I suggest here that this dimension constantly has - but not always explicitly and directly- accompanies the critical diagnoses related to “the reification of the consciousness of the proletariat” (Lukacs), the conceptualization of “state capitalism” (Pollock), or even the idea of the “administered world” (Adorno). Depoliticization could appear more directly and explicitly considered in the idea of the “enclosure of the universe of discourse and action” (Marcuse) and the famous “technocratic thesis” depicted in Habermas’ early texts. Lastly, the recent work of Wendy Brown () can also be taken into consideration as a diagnosis of the devastating consequences that the neoliberal phase of Capitalism has produced for the political identity directly from the institutional arrangements produced in the educational system, courts of justice, and the electoral dynamics of the political systems. Accordingly, this conceptual development corresponds to the historical-institutional evolution of Capitalism in the 20th century and can resemble as one of the interests of critical theory to track the regressive tendencies of modern society.

In that context, an impulse to determine the absence of progress in politics can be distinctively characterized. Political progress could be there inferred as an attainment of a

historical situation in which the claims in favor of rational forms of life are coupled with suitable institutional complexes of social norms, and both can be achieved in accordance with the self-determination of the individuals being part of society. At the same time, it can also be distinctive that the lack of accomplishment of that situation can guide the critical thinking to consider the struggles of social groups that practically seek to overcome the blocking and repressing mechanisms underlying the impossibility of achieving a situation of political progress. Therefore, the discussion of the epistemological and methodological stances of critical theory should not be disregarded if one is to define the negative effects of the failed state of things of progress in politics as a phenomenon of depoliticization inflicted by the evolution of the capitalist society. The diagnosis and critique of depoliticization (signaling the idea of the lack of political progress) as a historical, practical, and pervasive social phenomenon intensified in the era of neoliberalism must be grasped at the levels of that discussion in critical theory.

Nevertheless, it is also clear that the debate about the procedure for determining the pathological effects impeding progress in political terms remains open, and that the discussion regarding the understating of social conflicts persists in a wide range of strategic notions emphasizing practices of resistance -both practical and epistemic-, mobilization, deliberation, and dissensus. Then, starting from the always problematic issue of the place of critique in the critical tradition as something opened and unanswered, I suggest to situate the discussion of the social pathology of depoliticization in the reconstruction of the idea of *delinguistification* of social interactions. In doing so, I seek to find a systematic and coherent grounding for (i) grasping the depoliticizing dynamics of contemporary capitalism, (ii) keeping the normativity of critical reflection sociologically oriented, and (iii) illuminating possible normative paths to analyze activities of *repoliticization* in our current times.

In that sense, I understand that depoliticization is a phenomenon that affects the dimensions of action and discourse, blocking the processes of creating a common political will. The blockages are rooted in the impossibility of constituting a common horizon of coordination of wills and particular interests and in the institutional obstacles that some political initiatives practically encountered to become issues of general concern. Examples

of this under neoliberalism are the flexibilization and segmentation of working hours and workspaces and the severe implementation of technical indexes or expertocratic mechanisms of validation and legitimization of social processes in upbringing, family, education, research, and, of course, in the politics of the political system.

Accordingly, insofar as depoliticization is a phenomenon that specifically manifests itself in the interaction of subjects and, between them and their institutional environments, it is possible to propose a specific theoretical understanding for it, as opposed to other pathological phenomena generated by capitalist social dynamics. Then, in principle, depoliticization could be differentiated from other social pathologies such as anomie, social instability caused by the crisis of one of the social institutions (family, education, state, market, or public opinion), the absence of justification of socially valid norms, the lack of recognition or even the alienation of one's awareness caused by the rhythms and dynamics of social acceleration. However, I do not argue that the difference of the pathology of depoliticization is in complete opposition to others like those, but that it can either be an *outcome* in which those other pathologies are reflected or an *origin* for their appearance after the experience of depoliticization. This could be so because depoliticization is manifested in the difficulties in coordinating actions and realizing a common will that concerns the *normative rightness* -in the Habermasian sense- of the moral claims involved.

In light of that view, the elaboration of appropriate theoretical support for the critical diagnosis of contemporary depoliticization is relevant. I suggest, then, that the idea of *delinguistification* provides the appropriate framework for its treatment. As I briefly remark in the next section, the social obstacles for building a common will out of diverse moral claims can be reconstructed as mechanisms of social reproduction in which a context of communication appears as *delinguistified* within the scope of the theoretical frame that Habermas has elaborated and adding some critical insights posed to it. Such mechanisms of social reproduction that reflect the pathology of depoliticization -and concretize the *thesis on delinguistification* to critically deal with it- are expressed in fixed roles ascribed to certain social groups by the functional operation of social institutions, constricted intentionalities

stemming from narrow frames of cultural interpretation, and imposed decisions reflected in formalized procedures oriented towards processes of decision making.

Delinguistification. A communicative paradigm of political blockages

The idea of delinguistification has its history in the tradition of critical theory. It is presented in the treatment of the loss of experience in the administered society against which Adorno -and to some extent also Horkheimer- develops the notion of the therapeutic work of philosophy in “saying the unsayable.” Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt have lucidly treated it in their analysis of the *public spheres of production* as “language barriers.” It was explicitly developed by Habermas as an effect of the systemic integration that is operated by the means of money and bureaucratic power in the *Theory of Communicative Action*. I take this latter theoretical and methodological frame in order to give a sociological and pragmatic impulse to the critical analysis of the pathology of depoliticization. Habermas’ work emphasizes the problems involved in the lack of intersubjective understanding that arises from the establishment of contexts of action regulated by other means than the communicative ones capable of creating common, direct, and public political power. Therefore, it is a suitable approach to deal with the dynamics of depoliticization blocking the citizens’ capacity to produce political power.

However, the thesis on delinguistification included in his work needs to be revisited in order to clarify its virtues and critical content. The strategy I follow to do so consists of reading three of the most insightful critiques of the Habermasian social theory in the works of Axel Honneth (1993), Amy Allen (2007), and Nancy Fraser (2013). The reviews of these authors are respectively directed towards, firstly, the excess of functionalism affecting the understanding of social conflict in the normative structures of social institutions, secondly, the lack of perception of power in the constitution of identities in the *Lifeworld*, and, thirdly, the rigidity in the use of some categories that separate the spheres of material reproduction from symbolic reproduction. These critiques are highly productive for revisiting the thesis on deslinguistificación included in Habermas work, and, more important, the theoretical insights provided by those authors enable analytical tools from which the blockages inflicted

by depoliticization can be more clearly diagnosed and the political competencies of citizens to overcome the blockages feasible reconstructed.

The idea of delinguistification -or a situation without communication- appears in Chapter VI of the II volume of the *Theory of Communicative Action*. Habermas strengthens his two-level social-institutional dynamic (*system and lifeworld*) and abstractly points out the difficulties carried out in social interactions led by the negative effects of systems. In this context, delinguistification means that everyday social relations are coordinated by means that dispensed the practical subjects from discussing their interests and action plans. This process is replaced by non-problematized normative schemes that impose pre-established ends to the interaction and enforce a strategic attitude to the implicated subjects. In this way and given the process of development of modern/capitalist society, delinguistification is, for Habermas, an effect of a type of integration of forms of life that he calls systemic, as opposed to another type that would involve processes of intersubjectivity qualified as rational and free from external pressures, called as social integration. However, the place in which Habermas formulates the idea of delinguistification is transitory concerning other moments that have more relevance in the complexity and aim of his late work. The thesis on delinguistification is mainly linked to a broad and full of nuances discussion with the classics of the sociology of action. Moreover, the thesis on delinguistification is dependent on a strong belief that the use of systems theory is necessary to reformulate the problem of reification in the tradition of the Frankfurt School. For these reasons, the thesis on delinguistification can be misleading and, therefore, requires scrutiny taking into consideration the political problems mentioned before.

A critical approach to the problem of depoliticization would necessarily imply the socio-historical explanation of the dynamics of institutionalization of such phenomenon and an immanent normativity aiming to overcome the problems inflicted by the depoliticization practically (politically). I assumed here that the appropriate theoretical frame to carry out that goal mainly rests on the critical theory depicted by Jürgen Habermas in the *Theory of Communicative Action*. Accordingly, the depoliticization of citizenship can be seen as a very

specific effect of *colonization of lifeworld* in which a historical form of the capitalist market and the modern state (*Neoliberalism*) fuels the tendencies toward depoliticization⁸⁵.

Habermas' general view of *colonization of lifeworld* provides a variety of notions and several implications that can be discussed, actualized, and articulated in a socio-critical approach (Celikates and Pollman, 2006). Therefore, in my view, it can offer critic-social enlightenment to the contemporary problem of depoliticization. In particular, the abstract explanation of the process of settlement of economic and bureaucratic imperatives ("systems") into the practical spheres of personality, culture, and social membership ("structures of the lifeworld") supports the groundings for such thematization. This far-reaching view of contemporary society provides an understanding of general socio-historical tendencies promoting the operation of institutions and normative structures of action on the basis of unleashed economic productivity and unchecked private interests instead of agreements based on public deliberations and common ethical arrangements. Thus, the description of depoliticization as a situation in which reaching common agreements (*Einverständnis*) is curtailed by latent powerful pressures allocated in the processes of understanding (*Verständigung*) -as certain readings of Habermas' theory inform- can be analyzed properly and treated in the theoretical socio-critical framework of the *Theory of Communicative Action*.

III. Systematically distorted communication (Power in communication). A model of power-laden contexts of social interaction.

Pathological communication

Accordingly, Habermas calls for the definition of the effects of colonization as the production of an "ever denser network of interactions that do without directly normative

⁸⁵ For Habermas: "The thesis of internal colonization states that the subsystems of the economy and state become more and more complex as a consequence of capitalist growth and penetrate ever deeper into the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld" (TCA2, p. 367).

steering and have to be coordinated in another way [strategically]" (Habermas, 1985, p. 180). In order to fulfill this circumstance, "there is either explicit communication or relief mechanisms that reduce the expenditure of communication and the risk of disagreement" (Habermas, 1985, p. 181). Moreover, "[...] there emerges an ethically neutralized system of action" (Habermas, 1985, p. 181) that is interpreted as a restriction for participants to thematize and problematize the already existing consensus and strategically driven contexts. Thus: "Insofar as actions are coordinated through a delinguistified medium such as money, normatively embedded interactions are turned into success-oriented transactions" (Habermas, 1985, p. 178).

As part of that, Habermas' view of colonization implicates the possibility of a diagnosis of social pathologies happening in different dimensions of social life (loss of meaning, anomie, psychopathologies). The social pathologies are the practical and empirical grounding from which the effects of colonization can be appropriately disclosed and normatively discussed in accordance with the rational reconstruction of the standards of communication that enable a counterfactual assessment of the given historical conditions. A pragmatic view inspired by later readings of the theory of colonization of lifeworld (McCarthy, 1984; 1991; Allen, 2007; Cooke, 1994; Bohman, 1986) indicates that the practical consequences of social pathologies are allocated directly in the processes of daily communicative interactions. From this perspective, a social pathology affects communicative interactions in the form of disconnections (or ruptures) between the normative validity basis of speech (ethical and moral) and what is effectively said by a speaker. The causes of such ruptures originate in the latent powerful functions of economy and authority overlying any contexts of interaction.

The disconnection between the validity basis of speech and what a speaker says benefits the practical and daily reproduction of the social power of economic and authoritative imperatives in the form of strategic communication uses. Therefore, reading closely together the *theory of colonization of the lifeworld* with the *theory on the pragmatics of communication* emerges a *thesis on the delinguistification* of practical interactions in which communication is systematically distorted and the critical-normative potential of

everyday linguistic interaction is blocked. Following Habermas (2001 p. 154-155), this happens when

the validity basis of linguistic communication is curtailed *surreptitiously*; that is, without leading to a break in communication or to the transition to openly declared and permissible strategic action. The validity basis of speech is curtailed surreptitiously if at least one of the three universal validity claims to intelligibility (of the expression), sincerity (of the intention expressed by the speaker), and normative rightness (of the expression relative to a normative background) is violated and communication nonetheless continues on the presumption of communicative (not strategic) action-oriented toward reaching mutual understanding.

My main goal in what follows is to provide a few features intending to support a critical understanding of the problem of depoliticization of citizenship from the presuppositions mentioned above. Habermas' discourse theory of *deliberative politics* directly provides a normative-ideal standard for that goal; however, as I also try to clarify here, in accordance with the given socio-historical status of the problem of depoliticization it is important to reconstruct its philosophical assumptions and sociological basis. From the perspective of socio-historical actualization of the discourse theory of politics, the depoliticization of citizenship can be seen as a pathology of social interactions affecting the dimension of action and discourse by blocking the processes of making a common political will. Again, I claim to consider that the process of delinguistification of social interactions can explain this pathology. Moreover -as something new in my argumentation- I suggest here that delinguistification means *systematically distorted communication* in which certain blockages overlie the process of making communicative power and curtail the normative validity basis of communication.

To do so, I continue with a necessary contextualization of the problem of depoliticized citizenship and my approach to the problem. Afterward, the core of my argument in this section is developed by means of a discussion about the place concerning the social power that represses communication in the *Theory of communicative action*. Lastly, I elaborate on a partial delineation of a socio-critical reappraisal of the concept of *communicative power*

that is both informed of the critical diagnosis of the effects of power in communication and normative in the sense of keeping the standards of a rational critique attached to political practices of transformation.

Three calls for power

The theory of colonization of the lifeworld received several critiques from many of the most important followers of Habermas' theoretical legacy. One of the most relevant aspects in the discussion of Habermas' political and social theory in the last decades is the location of social power. This path towards revisiting the thesis on delinguistification is already clear in the reception of Habermas's work in Anglo-Saxon social theory. Readers such as Thomas McCarthy (1985), Maeve Cooke (1997), and Nancy Fraser (2013) have contributed to clarifying the ambiguities derived from the abstract use of some categories - mainly those derived from the early distinction between *work* and *interaction*- to privilege a pragmatic view of social reproduction in which action appears as the central part of the analysis. This has led to a productive weakening of the use of systems theory as a primary category for the analysis of social interactions displayed within the scope of institutional contexts -social mobilizations and protests against the state, for instance-, and thus, the Anglo-Saxon reception has enabled to maintain the complexity of interactions at a practical level of empirical observation. Accordingly, based on those readings, the place from which the critical analysis of the social pathologies of communication must be carried out is the concrete level of the practical contexts of interaction. Those analytical categories do not directly and abstractly explain the existence of pathologies, and, therefore, it is only in the reality of distorted flows of communication or failed experiences of interaction that a positive evaluation of self-awareness and self-determination can be introduced. Freed from the conceptual rigidity imposed by an abstract use of the categories of social reproduction or a fixed communication ideal, the delinguistification thesis gains materiality and critical-normative power.

On their part, Honneth, Allen, and Fraser have contributed to a critical view of Habermas's theory by questioning the ambiguities of Habermas's understanding of power in everyday interactions. Departing from the view that remarks the excess in the abstraction of

certain analytical categories in the *Theory of communicative action*, and in the context of their theoretical endeavors, they have directly posed the inquiry into the relations of domination and subordination in which different social groups find themselves in institutionalized contexts (such as the state and the market) and non-institutionalized contexts (such as the public sphere and the family) as a shortcoming of Habermas's theory.

Honneth has criticized the excessive functionalism in Habermas' critical theory as a strategy to revalorize the social conflicts triggered within the normative patterns supporting the institutional complexes of society. Accordingly, he has depicted a critical theory model in which the disputation of the social rules is immanent to the existing institutional complexes made of both systemic and communicative mechanisms of coordination of actions. Honneth's theory is, therefore, capable of understanding the blockages as normative constraints that induce standards of misrecognition of the social injustice inflicted to a social group and to claim for the necessity of conquering new normative standards as a political goal in democratic societies. In the aim towards the revitalization of the thesis on *deslinguistificación*, Honneth's theory provides a theoretical frame for analyzing the normative standards impeding the recognition of social groups with their moral claims and the specific strategies those social groups implement to produce changes in social institutions.

Allen has established a remarkable critique against Habermas' reconstruction of the process of socialization and individual acquisition of communicative competencies. Following the Habermasian reading of George Mead, Allen finds new ways of diagnosing the processes of subjectivization and subjection to the structures of power that operate in everyday practical discourses. Allen suggests that there is a well-founded field for a critical theory of identity in Habermas reading of Mead. However, she also sustains that this promising endeavor vanishes with the dedication to the program on the pragmatics of communication by which the universal competencies of communication, as reconstructed before. Allen attempts to delineate a Habermasian theory of subjectification by claiming a methodological view in which the lifeworld appears as totally "empowered" from the perspective of a growing child whose acquisition of language also brings a kind of power with it that shapes identity. Moreover, Allen indicates that this theory of subjectification

could affect the use of language and reflect how social institutions territorialize the bodies and favor some intentionalities associated with hegemonic interpretations of gender and race. Thus, by focusing on this as a process of subjectivization, Allen remarkably points out another blockage underlying restricted contexts of communicative interactions that must be included in the thesis on delinguistification. It affects communicative interactions by imposing intentionalities on the parties and perpetuates cultural discrimination frames. As part of the theoretic frame of delinguistification, it must be attained to assess the political capacity of a social actor to be heard and take part in epistemically fair deliberations.

And finally, Nancy Fraser has provided another insight into critical theory by questioning the rigidity of Habermas' distinction between the dimension linked to material reproduction (the market and the state) and the dimension related to symbolic reproduction (the family and the public sphere). Fraser argues that the allocation of the institution of family is mistakenly placed in the dimension of symbolic reproduction, with the evidence supporting the idea that domestic work and the value of care happening in the family are essential for the material reproduction of capitalism. Thus, Fraser departs from a lack of gender perspective in the critical theory of Habermas. This leads him to ignore how the social institutions actually sheltered more severe functions of the capitalist system of production than the ones he can diagnose with the analytical distinction between material and symbolic reproduction. This becomes especially relevant at the moment of assessing the needs of those who are charged with upholding of reproduction at the expense of their freedom. Fraser provides an important criterion to understand an acute blockage of social interactions that implicate the burdens of roles assigned by the functions required by Capitalism to be institutionalized. This kind of delinguistification mechanism appears most distinctively as the material exclusion of the necessities of certain social groups that can only be contested by a far-reaching objective pointing towards the *defunctionalization* of the roles supported by the high-order functions of Capitalism.

As previously announced, I claim to take these three developments in recent critical theory as structures capable of describing patterns of deslinguistificación by posing three types of blockages to exercise political freedom. Those structures can be assembled and

attained as the internal components of a *thesis on delinguistification* that seeks to diagnose the existing problems for citizens to produce political power. The thesis on delinguistification designed by Habermas remains plausible if it is renewed with the clarifications and criticisms I have pointed out. In this sense, delinguistification can be defined as the result of the pressures exerted in contexts of interactions with a deficit of communicative rationality. Thus, delinguistification would be an index for the absence of self-determination by means of which the subjects who suffer from it experience the effects and impositions of normative patterns and means of action that impede and block communication with other individuals and with institutions. In this way, the possibility of diagnosing these blockages would provide a model of a critical approach to a current political reality that, as Wendy Brown says, has even undone the capacity of individuals to consider themselves as citizens.

The discussion of this problem can involve both internal and external perspectives, but, in general, it can be considered around three critical axes or themes: *Firstly*, for authors such as McCarthy (1991; 1978) and Allen (2017), the implicit vocation towards universalization of the outcomes of the methodology of *rational reconstruction* (*formal pragmatics, discourse ethics, and deliberative democracy*) employed in the preparatory texts to the *Theory of Communicative Action* to formulate a theory of historical development of modernity reduce the role of the real existing forms of power. For them, the scientific (formal) and quasi-transcendental status of the rational reconstruction in the field of the theory of history includes an emphasis on progress by which micro and meso levels of power are overlooked. In this way, the empirically oriented theory of social pathologies -in general- that could provide a clear understanding of the effects of power at those levels would be more an assumption resulting from the logical necessity of the general theory of historical progress than an authentic historical-practical problem of the modern social institutions in which progress is at stake.

Secondly, the vision of power in the theory of communicative action can be read as something problematic that needs to be specified from the well-known criticisms made by Honneth (1993) and Fraser (2013) on the absence of a more attentive look at social conflicts and the lack of an understanding on the phenomena of domination based on gender. In both

cases, the critical-social perspective of the dynamics of social reproduction that Habermas approaches by resorting to the analytical distinctions of social integration and systemic integration, and symbolic reproduction and material reproduction, leads to an evident lack of a more concrete approach to the way in which relations of subordination unfold between social groups and, especially, from those who seek the transformation of normative structures in different institutional (the state and the market) and non-institutional (the family and the public sphere) contexts.

Thirdly, Habermas' social and political theory presents difficulties when attempting to establish a discussion with perspectives dedicated to offering internal and systematic visions of power and domination -in specific terms-. This arises given the demanding conditions under which Habermas' communication theory delineates the universal pretensions of the defense of moral autonomy. As Allen (2007; 2009) has pointed out concerning this problem, the compatibilization between autonomy and power does not turn out to be a happy chapter in recent academic discussions linking Habermas with other authors -especially with Foucault-. Whether it is because, from the Habermasian viewpoint, a purely transcendental perspective of power is imposed in advance from the theory of the universal pragmatics of language or the Foucauldian standpoint, the possibility of such transcendence of power-laden contexts is quickly rejected in favor of a totalizing view of the effects of power, the theory of communicative action that attempts to demonstrate the emancipatory potential inscribed in normative validity claims does not prove to be so helpful for critical theorizing from the problematic of power that has been so important recently in the social sciences.

In the light of the development of more recent critical theories linked to the political context of contestation and dissensus proposed by the contemporary social movements that have nurtured radical-immanent perspectives in which the whole horizon of social relations appears organized by power and interwoven by domination (Negri and Hardt, 2000; Butler, 1997; Laclau, 2007), Habermas' critical theory does not appear as solid and clear. Moreover, in several contrasts, communication theory not only shows a deficit in its explanations of the practical functioning of power in social contexts, but Habermas's political theory -in

particular- appears inadequate concerning other positions that have been able to follow more closely the harmful tendencies that neoliberal capitalism has imposed on freedom. I believe that this gap can be fulfilled by harmonizing the theory of communicative action with a suitable theory of power. Within the theoretical and methodological frame produced by this, the transcendental normativity characterizing Habermas' political theory can render plausibility at the level of current historical problems.

Power and subjective freedom

The settling of criticisms mentioned above leads to different consequences depending on the emphasis one wishes to place on one of the central theoretical and methodological dimensions constituting Habermas's broad and systematic work. They may also lead to different paths of theoretical construction, as has occurred with some of the authors mentioned. In the case of my research interest, the critiques related to the question of power in the *Theory of Communicative Action* situate the critical analysis of the effects causing the depoliticization of citizenship under *pragmatic, contextual, and weak* premises. I, therefore, seek to scrutinize the problem of depoliticization of citizenship amid the tension between the concepts of *power* and *autonomy*, assuming that citizenship is at stake within power-laden contexts of social interaction and the possibilities of performing the transcendental validity claims contained in the communication. This means that the critical approach to citizenship that considers the depoliticization of social relations is postulated as a development of the essential presuppositions of the *Theory of Communicative Action*, correcting its possible excesses and updating the scope of its critical presuppositions. In this sense, the tension that is at the center of the discussion of citizenship means that the problems related to the depoliticization of social relations are located in political-practical spaces of action in which the prevailing social power is reflected in contexts of interaction that are delinguistified and mediated according to the degree to which the effects of power block the free exchange of validity claims and the participation of those affected in processes of normatively reached consensus.

However, a critical-normative perspective on citizenship sustained from that point of view can be possibly achieved if a precise harmonization between a systematic vision of

social power and the normative validity of communication is carried out. In the debate that arose after the interrupted exchange of ideas between Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas, a path towards such a perspective has been opened up⁸⁶. Following the work of Amy Allen (2007; 2009) dedicated to finding a productive analysis of the *Foucault/Habermas* debate for the development of a gendered critique of subjectivity, the theoretical presuppositions of power and moral autonomy that are recognized as central aspects of each of these authors can be shown to be two sides of a contemporary model of critical political theory; if certain aspects of each of the works are emphasized and negotiated⁸⁷.

The central aspect to be considered in Foucault's theory of power would be the scope of the effects of the disciplinary power of modern institutions over subjectivity. The explanatory character of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1978) and the description of processes of subjection (Foucault, 2003; 1976) are the most important elements to be retained. Moreover, the revelatory and instructive operation of power into subjectivity would yield space for incorporating normative presuppositions of moral autonomy, as Foucault pointed out in his late work and some interviews when he faced the need for normative analysis of the strategies of resistance and freedom against power. Therefore, Foucault's analyses of power and subjection in the middle-period work at the *College of France* and the later works on the *technologies of the self* offer one side of the coin of a theory of critical citizenship that could diagnose the damaging effects of power in contexts of social interaction.

⁸⁶ The debate between Foucault and Habermas could never take place due to the lack of agreement on the central aspect of the discussion. However, it is known that the authors were in contact and there are mutual references (more detailed in the case of Habermas about Foucault) in each other's works from which it is possible to trace some elements and implications of the debate that could have developed. See Kelly (1994).

⁸⁷ Despite I follow almost entirely Allen's work on the compatibilization of Foucaultian and Habermasian perspectives, I also consider that her interest in developing specific critical insights into the field of gender studies tends to overlook important dimensions and potentials of the *Theory of communicative action*. Her criticism is usually carried out from the perspective of the models of subjectivity that deliberately overemphasizes certain dimensions of Habermas' theory such as the account of individuation through socialization and his ethics without acknowledging the background of the communicative rationality and its critical support for a general social theory, as for instance, Maeve Cooke and Thomas McCarthy see it. More crucially, it means that Allen does not consider directly the groundings of the program of formal pragmatics in which the therapeutical effects and emancipatory potentials of practical deliberation and communication are rooted.

In the lectures of *1975-1976*, Foucault defines power in a relational way meaning that it “is never anything more than a relationship that can -and must- be studied only by looking at the interplay between the terms of that relationship” (p. 14). This relational basis supports a positive notion of power that Foucault anticipated in *Discipline and Punishment* -and repeats in the *History of Sexuality*- as something productive:

we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms; it “excludes”, it “represses”, it “censors”, it abstracts”, it “masks”. In fact, power produces; it produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth (1978 p. 194).

Following Davidson (2003) and Allen (2007), the sense of power developed by Foucault in the middle of 1970 produces a *strategic model of power* in which the repressive or the productive effects of power operate in situated relationships oriented by strategical actions. Accordingly, “power relations involve confrontation or struggle between opposing forces [and] there is an instrumentalist logic to these confrontations or struggles” (Allen, 2007, p. 50). On the path of rejecting any form of juridical definitions of power under the model of modern sovereignty and confirming the relational sense of the strategic model, in *Volume I of the History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1978) attests:

Power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them, as the support which these force relations find in one another thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions or contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies (p. 92-93).

Along with this revealing characterization of power, Foucault also argues in *Society Must Be Defended* that the subject is *constituted* by concrete power relations (where power

becomes “capillary”) in conditions that are neither completely controlled nor decided by the subjects (“intentional and non-subjective”). This opens up the place for a coherent conception of *subjection* in which the individual subject is the medium through which “power passes” leaving its effects as “bodies, gestures, discourses, and desires to be identified and constituted as something individual” (Foucault, 2003 pp. 29-30)⁸⁸. Moreover, this description of subjection is compatible with Foucault’s analysis of *governmentality* and -most importantly here- with the latter concerns about the strategies of resistance known as *practices* or *technologies of the self*. While the former can provide an explanatory understanding of the forms of *disciplinary techniques* and *biopower* –such as the ones advanced by neoliberalism in the form of a new rationality, as Wendy Brown shows-, the latter, with the connection between the subjection to power and a more normative oriented analysis of resistance, can offer the best of Foucault’s theory for a critical view of political interactions. These issues are revealed by Foucault in *What is Critique?* as follows:

If governmentalization is really this movement concerned with subjugating individuals in the very reality of a social practice by mechanisms of power that appeal to a truth, I will say that critique is the movement through which the subject gives itself the right to question power about its discourses of truth. Critique will be the art of voluntary inservitude, or reflective indocility. The essential function of critique would be that of desubjectification in the game of what one could call, in a word, the politics of truth (1986, p. 386).

Foucault claims here for a critical discursive practice that produces *desubjectifications* by means of the truth that goes against the given effects of power. The “struggles against subjection” (Foucault, 1983, p. 212), as he calls what social movements can perform in *The Subject and Power*, involves transforming relations capable of reconstitute the subjectivity. As he says in clearly normative terms, “we have to promote new forms of subjectivity

⁸⁸ Amy Allen’s reading followed here contradicts a few of the categorical assessments given by some critical theorists about Foucault’s notion of subjection as totalizing and anti-modernist (Honneth, 1991; McCarthy, 1991). Allen’s reconsiderations are important here because of the productivity they can offer to compatibilized a theory of power with an account of autonomy. I, therefore, assume her reconstruction as methodological guidance that provides the most appropriate insights for my purposes.

through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us [...]” (p. 216). Thus, the explanatory image of the relations of power delineates the necessity of an account of freedom capable of producing resistance against the powers imposed that constitute practical individuality. Foucault’s late work goes in this direction, but, as Nancy Fraser (1989) remarkably argued, this normative program is highly ambiguous and unexplicit, considering it as a likely practical political guidance. Nevertheless, Foucault draws the contours of the space for the suitable pragmatic, contextual, and discursively situated account he needed for his program of resistance and freedom. In *What is Enlightenment?*, he defines his endeavor as “oriented toward the “contemporary limits of the necessary”, that is toward what is not or is no longer indispensable for the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects” (1997, p. 313).

IV. Depoliticized neoliberal citizenship. On the ideology in communicative interactions.

Systematically distorted communication

At the end of the *Theory of communicative action*, Habermas mentions the problem of *systematically distorted communication* as a key orientation for the diagnosis of certain pathologies of the formation of identity within the frame of the tasks of critical theory inspired by the paradigm of communication, and, in *A Reply to a few critical comments*, he praises Bohman’s (1985; 1986; 1989) use of the idea of distorted communication as a possible form of ideology critique on the premises of formal pragmatics. These references indicate certain dynamics taking place in the lifeworld can be analyzed as recurrent communicative pathologies affecting social interaction. Similarly, but in a more general and unspecific way, his *Reflections on Communicative Pathology* presented the idea of systemically distorted communication. In this text, Habermas (1974 p. 147) mentions that the key to understanding the idea of distorted communication:

lies in a certain *overburdening of the external organization of speech*. This burden *must be shifted onto the internal organization of speech* and results in

systematic distortion. I use the term “distortion” to stress the insight that the internal organization of speech expresses universal and unavoidable presuppositions of linguistic communication. The transcendental necessity implied by this feature of ineluctability or of a lack of alternatives does not imply inviolability. Rather, it means that the violation of the internal organization of speech gives rise to pathological mutations of the patterns of communication. In other words, the pathogenesis can be traced back to problems that exert pressure on the external organization of speech. When this pressure is shifted from the external to the internal organization of speech, it has a distorting effect. I should now like to analyze this distortion, which *sets in at the validity basis of speech*.

The disturbance of systematically distorted communication lies at a deeper level than the disturbance of anomalous behavior that expresses itself in divergence from a socially binding norm. Distorted communication does not violate any norms of action that enjoy social validity for contingent reasons; they violate universal presuppositions of communication that in no way change from one normative context to another.

The distortion implies: *first*, the result of a disconnection between the given context of the external organization and the transcendental capacity of the validity claims implied in communication, *second*, a negative dynamic coming from the outside to the inside of the structure of communication, and *third*, that its causes stem from the external organization of a context of interaction in which its validity basis is seized. As implicated in this description, a certain range of blockages curtailing the process of making communicative power can be revealed. Thus, following Bohman (1986), distorted communication is exactly how

formal pragmatics can describe ideology as “systematic restrictions of the formal conditions of communication”, in which violations of the internal structure of speech involve “fragmentation” and “fusion” and disconnect the various structural

components of speech while employing quite diverse mechanisms of possible distortions and achieving quite varied pragmatic effects (p. 344).

This notion of contemporary ideology based on the premises of communication retains Habermas analysis of the evolution of the phenomenon at the end of the *Theory of Communicative Action* in which he assumes it as a “fragmentation of conscious” itself inasmuch as what is at stake in the idea of systematically distorted communication implies “[...] that ideologies are totalizing conceptions of order that are immune to the corrosive effects of rational scrutiny” (Cooke 2006b p. 12). Beyond the epistemic status of the notion of ideology, what is definitely at stake is the pragmatic disconnection between the realizable universal meaning of communication and the type of validity implicated in the speech of communicative speakers/hearers in situations in which certain contents have been refrained from mutual evaluation. As Cooke (2006) claims this notion of ideology is tuned with other contemporary expressions of the phenomenon that retained Marx’s idea of false consciousness as “[...] a set of beliefs that present oppressive social institutions and practices as fixed and given” (p. 12), such as Michael Freeden’s conception “that ideologies decontest the meaning of central political terms, covering over the power relationships that are central to a given concept”, and Judith Butler’s idea “that ideological closure occurs where the political salience of certain normative contents is denied” (Cooke 2006b p. 12).

Ideology as systematically distorted communication could be, therefore, slightly differentiated from classical contemporary accounts such as Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s definition as “objectively necessary false consciousness”, and Laclau’s thesis on the apparent transparency of representations of “impossible objects” that naturalizes social norms and values and closes off contestations against the given hegemony of dominance by virtue of the impossible but necessary ethical character of the particular representation of those transcendental objects (such as truth, justice, liberal democracy, human rights). The difference on the account of distorted communication that is compatible with object necessary character of ideology and the appearances of the “fullness of society” in particular representations relies not so much on the status of the phenomenon that signals the constituency of the historical reality in which one has to participate playing the reifying game

of the objective social distortions that serve to the maintenance of the totalizing character of the subjective oppression that capitalism requires to reproduce; neither it is too different from the distorted effects blocking the logics of contestation allocated in relationalities that could dispute the regime of dominance. The main difference of the perspective of communicative distortions is grounded in the situatedness of its considerations about the nature of the phenomenon and the rationality of its occurrence. Systematically distorted communication analyzes contemporary ideology from a participant perspective, avoiding any external vantage point of view for its consideration, and, assumes the effects of distortion on the practical process of communication that remain open to the possibilities to its argumentative counterbalances carried out by the inherent functions of disclosure of motivation and orientation of justification allocated in communication. The situatedness and pragmatism of the account of ideology as distorted communication retains the elements of the objectively necessary character of a false consciousness acquired as a kind of habitus for participating in social interactions, but, at the same, it assumes the feature of the impossible full determination of any apprehended transcendental idea that compels motivation and justification of actions by virtue of the particular representations. These particularities confirm, in addition, that the situatedness and pragmatism of systematically distorted communication fits well in Habermas's general concerns about the fragmentation of (communicative) consciousness postulated in the *Theory of Communicative Action* as a claim in favor of Daniel Bell's thesis about the "end" of the classical ideologies as the sources for general schemes of action. The distortion of communication renders plausibility to the thesis of fragmentation of consciousness from a critical-hermeneutical perspective that interprets citizens' lack of motivational and justificatory interests to engage in ongoing deliberations as undercuts allocated in the cognitive moment of communication. This internal-participant perspective to Habermas's sociological thesis on the fragmentation of consciousness, therefore, offers more plausibility to the idea that there is a space for an account of ideology in his work that, nevertheless, should be accompanied with a critical-hermeneutical approach to the speech acts that reveal disconnections between formal-universal meanings of communicative rationality and the concrete validity employed by the subjects, as Bohman (1996) has suggested.

The disturbed validity of communicative power

Accordingly, I suggest that the concept of *communicative power* playing a major role in the field of political theory can be reinscribed in the horizon of the tension between *power* and *validity* in contexts of interaction to gain a renewed socio-critical potential. As Flynn (2004) argues, communicative power is one of Habermas' central concepts employed to situate the power generated by citizens through discourse as the core of his deliberative theory of democracy. For Habermas (1996), "[...] all political power derives from the communicative power of citizens" (p. 170) and he also suggests that the process of will-formation and the creation of public opinion it entails is seen as the source of an entire realization and legitimization of a democratic form of life. Habermas follows Arendt's notion of power denoting a human capacity to act in concert that opens the space for processes of interaction that shape a common will, but criticizes that, in her account, the link between human interaction and the function of legitimization of administrative politics has been too quickly established. Then, he discloses the function of *power-dissolving* (Barreyro 2018) that comes from the "anarchistic core of communication present in daily interaction" (Habermas 1996 p. 116), and not only the *iusgenerative* function of *legitimizing power* (Flynn 2004) for democratic institutions.

Through the reconstruction of the idea, Habermas emphasizes the informality and social nature of the power that communication can generate. Thus, the conceptual reconstruction of the idea of communicative power under Habermas's philosophical premises remarks, first, the "motivating force" it possesses in "shared beliefs" "produced discursively and intersubjectively" (1996 p. 147); and, second, it stands as the "sociological translation of the concept of deliberative politics" (1996 p. 315). The concept of communicative power, thus, connects the account of the validity claims, his social theory of action (with the mediating symbolic structures of influence), and the theory of deliberative politics. Regarding the processes of justification, that constellation of reflections interwoven by the concept of communicative action offers the most advantaged opportunity for carrying out the critical-normative analysis of politics situated in the entanglement of *power* and *validity*.

Following that, the critical reflection of communicative power cannot be established in pure normative terms. The place in which the entanglement of power and communication, in which the constellation of ideas involved in justificatory practical interactions is steered, is in what Habermas calls *the fabric of the lifeworld* according to the way it is historically and institutionally shaped. Here communicative power could be assessed in the most primary, informal, and compelling form because of its rootedness in the fundamental processes of social reproduction involved in such a fabric of social life. The consequences of this are important for the aims of my project. First, that forces the normative analysis of communicative power (*as the political power derived from the communicative interactions of citizens*) to be carried out in the very crucial instance of its early *cognitive* in the process of making such power; and, second, that compels the critical assessment of its political potentials to be undertaken in the form of the obstacles that could take place against a successful process of making a common political will through of mutual understanding.

The cognitive moment of power

Following Kreide (2016), communicative power is internally structured by three differentiated *moments*: (i) a cognitive, (ii) an intersubjective recognition of shared beliefs, and (iii) a common will that serves as input for the political system. The cognitive moment denotes the processing of information that makes reasons and attains relevant topics and contributions (Habermas 1996, p. 147); in abstract terms, the individual exchange with the objective, subjective and social worlds makes an experience and ignites interactions. The second one can be labeled as the pure intersubjective one that is created by the *motivating force* towards the production of *shared beliefs* (Habermas 1996, p. 147), and *could* result in an aggregation of claims from a discursive process of negotiation and deliberation. And, a third one denotes the existence of a powerful drive itself, the triggered expression -referring to Arendt again- of a *common will* aiming to produce legitimation of law-setting processes and justification *or* to perform as a new social force against institutions, historical situations, or social practices. Then, while the cognitive moment is the ignition of the process for the creation of communicative power, the second one implies the classical representation of

discursive interaction and deliberation by means of giving and receiving reasons, in which the third one is seen as its product in the form of either a legitimizing or a disruptive force.

The emphasis on the cognitive moment of the process of making communicative power must be given due to the philosophical standards of the paradigm of communicative rationality and the pragmatic status of the theory of validity claims. The cognitive moment grasps an instance in which the motivating force and justificatory tracking can be assumed as politically decisive inasmuch it is here wherein the external pressures exerted on communication operate, impeding the thematization and problematization of certain topics that maintain the given socio-historical normality as something unsurmountable. Argumentation processes that entail the pursuit of the truth and the right (justice) and the development of justification processes that conduct to the making of shared beliefs -in accordance with the idealized presuppositions of universal respect, egalitarian reciprocity, and inclusiveness that Habermas ascribes to practical discourses- are curtailed by the very initial blocking of the motivating and justifying reasons in communication. Inasmuch as delinguistification of social interactions operates altering the validity basis of speech -as it will be seen- the cognitive moment of the process of making communication serves as the analytical dimension to grasp the disconnection between the represented needs, desires and interests of citizens and both the transformative and legitimizing capacities of human interaction. Moreover, the focus on the cognitive moment provides the analytical basis for the specific description of the dynamics of distortion of communication that is -as Habermas (2001 p. 154) says- “curtailed *surreptitiously*; that is, without leading to a break in communication or to the transition to openly declared and permissible strategic action”. In addition, a normative model concerning the possible alternatives to confront the distortions of communication can be allocated in the cognitive moment because it is exactly the moment in which certain political representations included in validity claims of practical subjects can be attained as the carriers of certain ethical investments capable of disclosing and promoting the motivational and justificatory forces of communicative deliberation.

The cognitive moment of the process of making communicative power is related to the problem of distorted communication as much as it is where the closures and disturbances

blocking the context-transcendent power of claims take place. A curtailed communicative interaction is, therefore, a situation in which moral claims about social practices and institutions cannot be subjected to scrutiny by the participants involved. A distorted communication takes the effective form of social rules, institutional arrangements, and traditional values are exempted from public justification. From this point of view, the ideology critique of communication seeks to uncover the citizen's lack of motivation and their practical refrain from justification as problems affecting deliberations that are directly caused by the external forms of organizations of the speech. What has been said for the model of power-laden contexts of interactions counts as a source of explanation for this phenomenon that, meanwhile, can only be empirically reflected in the quality of deliberations defined by the levels of motivation and justification that could be enough for shaping shared beliefs among citizens and social groups, as it is exemplary in political alliances, articulations and coalitions of social movements; and/or it is evidenced by the levels of argumentations that can sufficient to produce a political will that impacts the social systems as a reform or radical transformation at a certain moment. This empiric undecidability of the kind of ideological critique does not, however, indicate a lack of understanding regarding the explanation of the adverse effects on communicative interactions and the political-normative implications that could be envisioned from a critical-pragmatical reading of the problems derived from the diagnosis of systematically distorted communication.

Neoliberal disturbances of political interactions

Accordingly, I conceived this particular task as an effort to think the current sociopolitical conditions in a broader sense that could apply to a more comprehensive range of places and -likely- support further explanations concerning the deep-seated damaging effects inflicted by neoliberal capitalism in all forms of life. As hinted here and supported elsewhere in Jurado and Gallo (2020), the damaging political effects caused by neoliberalism moves beyond the indexicality of the crisis of democratic values, principles, and institutions of the societies of the global north.

As a historical form of capitalism performing in the global south, the destructive forces of the extractivist production, precarization of labor, and unappreciation of care under

neoliberalism run along with the prefiguration of impoverished subjectivities through the deprivation of the systems of cultural reproduction such as education, the dismantling of the diversity of community practices by means of a forced displacement and de-territorialization that unbound peoples from their local spaces, and, the disintegrations of social solidarities caused by constant delegitimizing effects derived from the pressures exerted on social-normative arrangements by a wide diversity of neoliberal (foreign) policies that nurture the historical weaknesses of the capacities of the states in the global south. In accordance with these dynamics, neoliberalism submits political interaction to a constant deterioration and displacement of rational deliberation. It colonizes forms of representation of the good life of peoples by refined self-governmental techniques that cover the scope of their perceptions about desires, needs, and interests and exacerbate the immediate identificatory projections of those perceptions with the leadership of authoritarian populists, discourses as innovation, and practices linked to the entrepreneurial values of self-employment that are exonerated from the justification of their benefits in public deliberation. As Veronica Gago (2017) has remarkably argued, for the neoliberal reason entrenched in Latin America, the functions of financial debt at the level of everyday life in Argentina has become a basis for social reproduction in such a sense that it now sustains popular economies by which, for instance, the selling of traditional food at a corner of the cities can be a source of precarious labor to which an old grandma dedicates a big chunk of his elder lifetime. At the same time, there is recent evidence portrayed in the news that shows the damaging impact on social representations of welfare, labor and normative values of people caused by the technological platforms such as *Uber* and *Rappi* that extract value from deregulated labor activities of transportation and deliveries. On March 23 of 2023, deregulated employees of delivery platforms protested against a legal reform of labor promoted by president Petro in Colombia that promoted the formalization and the extension of the existing social and health system guarantees for them. Those workers claimed: “We don't want formalization, we demand independence”⁸⁹.

⁸⁹ See, <https://www.semana.com/politica/articulo/protesta-de-trabajadores-de-rappi-en-contra-de-la-reforma-laboral-del-gobierno-petro-no-queremos-una-formalizacion-exigimos-independencia/202309/>

Chapter IV Repoliticization of Citizenship: Towards a Conception of Critical Politics Based on Communication

While the present times perform an unprecedented setting of an ambiguous political phenomenon, such as the intensification of autocratic powers *within* liberal governments, the rising of authoritarian groups *within* -until recently called- pluralistic societies, and, the growing inequalities *within* social-democratic constitutional regimes, contemporary political and social theories find it difficult to formulate answers against the actual process of depoliticization that runs below those undemocratic symptoms. As suggested in the last chapter, the depoliticization induced by neoliberalism has intensified the regressive tendencies of modern society concerning the diminishing of the political autonomy of citizens. That includes a dialectics of social institutions and forms of agency altered by imperatives of the justice of the markets that has -currently- curtailed the subjective capacity to create common political will and submit into the power of citizens the conditions of the material mediation of social interactions. Accordingly, contemporary political and social theories face a problematic situation: it is neither possible anymore to idealize certain institutional settings or arrangements nor to be faithful to certain social agencies, cultural identities, or group dynamics to confront the neoliberal deep-seated blocking effects at the practical levels of social reproduction. Likewise, the analyses rooted in terms of pure immanency seem to be weak in front of the penetrating capacity that neoliberal practices possess regarding the production of human experience (employing its means of technology and surveillance).

As Cristina Lafont (2020) has recently argued, claiming a radical participatory conception of deliberation in order to propel the legitimizing capacities of citizenship in democratic societies, both theories inspired in an immanent and contingent perspective of social interactions, which led to a *radical pluralistic* conception of political interactions, and the normative and proceduralist approaches to political agreements, which settled a wide range of *expertocratic* conceptions of participation in political decisions, fail to grasp a strong

notion of self-democratic legislation. For Lafont, current contemporary political discourses diminish the plausibility of an engaged identification of citizens with agendas of political accountability and committed compromise with the discussion that could enhance the quality of democratic deliberations. Lafont's work offers a remarkable systematic instruction concerning the understanding of the current historical-political problem as a disconnection between, on the one hand, the participatory dynamics in which the processes of will formation take place and, on the other hand, the institutional sphere of political decisions and decision making. One of the main queries of this knot that Lafont faces is the problem of the effective influence of citizens on the political matters they are interested and correspond to their attitudes and ways of thinking. Remarkably, she defends a notion of deliberation in a wide sense that takes place in diverse places, on different subjects and, most importantly, at the plurality of levels involving common daily interactions of will formation and the institutionalized processing mechanisms of law and policy-making. On this basis, Lafont focuses on discussing the current problems concerning the realization of the ideal of democratic self-legislation, claiming that the normative criteria involved in such ideal concerns a conception of citizens as participants of a political community in equal conditions that could effectively reach the high standards of validity of political deliberation and produce -on the run- enough tracking force to legitimize democratic forms life. These conditions should imply an examination of the practices and institutions and a reflective capacity of the political subjects involved in the assessment of those practices and institutions that could nourish and support the processes of deliberations and their outcomes.

Remarkably, Lafont's analysis takes as the core of her political-theoretical argument the meaningful functions of deliberation, as Habermas (2020) recognizes: the purely *epistemic aspect* that *motivates* the participants in deliberation to get involved in processes like elections, disputes over opinions, and find ways of expressing their preferences about matters of common concern; and the *socio-integrative aspect* that the processes of *justification* taking place in those same deliberative procedures could produce as relative states of inclusion and recognition of preferences, perspectives and claims of the participants in deliberations. It is revealing in this sense that, under the premises of the ideal of democratic

self-legislation, political deliberations include the intrinsic moments of *discovering the truth* and of *encountering moments of shared beliefs* for a political community involved in different events of participation. The clear-cut elaboration and exemplified explanation of that argument makes an enlightening metacritical presentation that is both political-theoretical revealing -as mentioned-and socio-historical guided. The reasonability guided by the expectations of participants committed to achieving the *truth* and the common outcomes produced by the agreements reached -at different scales and through different mechanisms- by the negotiations of *shared* convictions shape a meaningful image of political deliberation that both overcomes the skeptical views of ontologically oriented theories of social immanentism that support a view of radical pluralistic politics and the abstract normativism that lies behind the expertocratic and procedural models of political decision making.

I want to take advantage of Lafont's important contributions to introduce the last part of my dissertation, taking into a specific consideration the normativity ascribed to the ideal of citizenship as political autonomy and its current contemporary pressures inflicted by neoliberal capitalism on the universe of action and discourse. As mentioned, I have interpreted this problem as a phenomenon of depoliticization that can be portrayed as a pathology of social relations that creates a dynamic of communication systematically distorted or delinguistified. By employing Habermas' *colonization thesis* in a sense by which systemic integration can be directly reflected in distorted communications, the analysis concerning the phenomenon of depoliticization in neoliberal times could be established in contexts of interaction overburdened by damaging effects of social powers that pressure the organizing of speech externally and wherein context-transcending power of validity claims remains contended as an always remaining force grounded in the citizen's capacities to communicative. Here, then, I want to assume the challenge of thinking about the normative sources for a model of the context-transcending power of communication that, in accordance with further readings and analysis of the critical-political scope of Habermas' theory of communication, could be stated for Cristina Lafont, Maeve Cooke, James Bohman, Regina Kreide, Jeffrey Flynn, and Mariana Barreyro -among others-, could be placed in certain moments of the process of making communicative power, emphasizing its critical-

ideological functions, and analyzing both the motivating and justificatory forces implied in its idea of deliberation.

In that sense, I conclude my dissertation by offering an image of what could correspond to a conception of critical politics that takes into consideration a strong notion of political autonomy -defined by the ideal of self-legislation and inscribed in the normativity of the concept of citizenship- and, at the same time, that is informed by the current social-historical conditions contending its realization. Considering the latter, my argument points towards a different direction than Lafont's important insights on the field of theory of democracy for considering the normativity of my view on communicative power within the social situatedness, historical contexts, and critical perspective that the phenomenon of depoliticization produce to communicative interactions in neoliberal times.

As hinted, I want to suggest in the present chapter the very initial and general contours of a critical-theoretical counterweighting approach that remains normatively attached to the idea of citizenship as political autonomy reconstructed previously and the problematic phenomenon socio-historically informs that of depoliticization inflicted by the regime of neoliberal capitalism. Coming across these two axes, the paradigm of critical theory based on communication allows the interpretation of those circumstances as problems of social interaction that occur in power-laden contexts in which the transcendental force of communication remains latent and available in the validity claims raised by subjects in daily interactions. The center of the problem is, therefore, *how* these claims raised could provide enough motivational and justificatory force to generate, maintain or enhance deliberations that concern the desires, needs, and interests of the citizens involved. Assuming that the phenomenon of depoliticization inflicted by neoliberalism means -in the strict sense- that social interactions are performed in a delinguistified way, those situations in which deliberations are disclosed beyond the given settled a path for a practical counterbalance of the eroding historical circumstances diminishing the undoing of the human capacities to subject the social relations to their communicative powers. The scope and result of such idealized situations remain empirically undecided mainly because of a secondary premise that charges the critical theory paradigm of communication and assumes a non-selective

pattern of social development. However, their envisioning could enlighten a non-defeatist model of critical reasoning that, despite the limiting, damaging, and catastrophic times that press current human existence, nurtures the capacities of human interaction to understand each other and produce change at the scale and degree that one is found.

The scheme of this final stage of my analysis, therefore, supports a critical view of the characterized as depoliticized social interaction of contemporary citizens that, first, revisits the concept of communicative power to place in the cognitive moment (of the internal components implicated in the practical processes of making) the effects of depoliticization, that is, the systemic distortion that produces the difficulties of delinguistification of social interaction and curtails political deliberations (I). In accordance with the premises of the philosophical foundations of Habermas' formal-pragmatics, those problems can be assumed as blockages for argumentation that curtail the motivating and justificatory forces inscribed in human communication. Thus, the explanation of what is going on when the blockages are settled supports the standards of a very special critique of ideology in which both a model for diagnosing the colonization of daily language is evidence and a practical assessment of distorted interactions could be envisioned (II). This reasoning leads to the stance of what could be the object of such an evaluation of practices or political interaction that upheld the chances of a free interplay between argumentative reasons (of motivation and justification) and the given social contexts at stake in deliberations of citizens. Following the perspective that communicative action could show its most comprehensive political-theoretical benefits when it is historized -as Maeve Cooke (2006b) sustains-, the analysis concludes with an analytical consideration of the status of political re-presentations of the good life involved in deliberations of citizens that give support to the disclosure of the motivational force and the impulse of justificatory compromises contended in communicative interactions. This is what I would like to contend in expressing repoliticization of citizenship. The social imaginaries, discourses and practices that portray such political representations of a good life claim a repoliticization of social relations by virtue of their igniting capacity for deliberation. As mentioned, it might not get us far from where we currently are, but it does provide a standard of reason to stand out the available

sources of the politics of critical citizenship grounded in effective experiences and to speak up within the chances of the practice of its realization aiming beyond the given socio-historical contexts (III).

I. Communicative power. A social-pragmatical reappraisal in the context-dependance of the validity of communication.

The transcendence of validity

Habermas' theoretical endeavor and defense of modern moral autonomy can complete the gap between the explanatory status of strategic power relations and the program of resistance of freedom left ambiguously treated by Foucault in normative terms, as many have hinted (McCarthy, 1991; Fraser, 1989; Allen, 2007). Habermas' idea of autonomy is supported by a robust claim for emancipation and it specifically implies an intersubjective meaning in which "the free actualization of personality of one individual depends on the actualization of freedom for all" (Habermas, 1990 p. 207). In general terms, Habermas understands moral autonomy as the capacity for self-reflection against norms, institutions, and practices established in the given social world. In his philosophical account of *communicative rationality*, autonomy is understood as self-determination measured by the *validity claims (truth, rightness, and authenticity)* raised in communicative interactions symbolically mediated. These normative claims are implicit in any communicative interaction and possess a binding force that cannot be avoided without forcing communication to be conducted by strategic purposes that curtail the possibility of coming to a legitimate agreement. More importantly, the theoretical support of the program of *formal-pragmatics* claims that the *form* of the validity claims can simultaneously perform as situated resources and transcendental forces with critical content. Validity claims

have a Janus face: As claims, they transcend any local context; at the same time, they have to be raised here and now and be de facto recognized if they are going

to bear the agreement of interaction participants that is needed for effective cooperation (1987, p. 322).

Following Cooke (1994), Benhabib (1986), and Allen (2007), Habermas articulates a transcendental force of communication by disclosing theoretically the critical power of validity claims. This *context-transcending power* of validity claims -as Maeve Cooke (1994; 2006) particularly qualifies them- could, therefore, make the other side of the coin of a theory of citizenship insofar as it couples with a description of power that is not only negative and operates at the level of social relations, such as the characterized above from Foucault. In this sense, *power-laden contexts of interaction* offer an internal view of the colonization of the lifeworld while *context-transcending validity* supports the normative basis for making the communicative power necessary to struggle against the colonizing social powers. A critical-normative perspective can be formulated by incorporating the presuppositions of the tension between power and autonomy -in the terms indicated- into the diagnosis related to the thesis of the delinguistification of social relations. Such a perspective should, therefore, point towards an analysis of strategies leading to a process of *repoliticization* of interactions.

Integrating the Foucaultian theory of power and the Habermasian perspectives of autonomy allows a model of critical politics in power-laden contexts of interactions that could be transformed by the performance of the critical force implicated in *validity claims*. Theoretically, Foucault's regimes of *power/knowledge* that constitute the *truth* steering social practices through the *technics of domination* are part of the assumptions underlying the internal operation in the *lifeworld* of the given functional processes by which strategic action (instrumental and authoritarian) is induced. Habermas offers the model the appropriate and robust tools to delineate the practical process of resistance and freedom by opposing the institutions reproducing social power and overcoming the blockages induced by communication by the strategic model of action. Methodologically, the Foucault/Habermas model of critical politics enables the possibility for the empirical characterization of that view, which can give more plausibility to the critical approach to the power-laden contexts of interaction. As McCarthy argues (1991), *genealogical* analysis provides the necessary inputs of the social power at stake in the institutions involved in a given practical-political

problematic situation, and *reconstruction* offers the appropriate groundings to inform the critical self-awareness that cultivates opportunities for recasting any given situation opened (Hoy and McCarthy 1994 p. 75-76).

The reconstructive analysis provides the tools to grasp the entanglement of power and communication in contexts of social interaction and supports a systematic basis for a normative approach to the problem of depoliticization of citizenship. Then, the model of critical politics formulated in the previous terms is meant to reveal its implications at the level of practical interactions and communicative practices. I, therefore, assume that Habermas's speech act theory moves at this level and includes the critical-normative potential for enlightening a theory of repoliticization. As mentioned, both the productivity of power and the normativity of freedom that results necessary to struggle against the operation of negative social powers can be articulated in Habermas' theory of communicative action in accordance with the entanglement of power and validity performed in practical interactions as confrontations, misunderstandings, and disagreements⁹⁰. However the transcendence of power-laden contexts by means of the critical power of validity claims needs to clarify its process of occurrence in a clear political fashion that implicates the opposition to the social powers curtailing its occurrence.

The pragmatist view of validity claims

According to the normativity ascribed by Habermas to the processes of justification in communicative interaction, it is in the analysis of the moral reasons claimed that the transformative power of communication can be evaluated. Thus, giving the impulse of a critical assessment, the process of making communicative power allocated in the tension between power and validity particularizes in theorizing the blockages inflicted by the promoting mechanisms of strategic action (instrumental and authoritative) to the *telos* of mutual understanding implicit in communication. As mentioned, the entanglement between power and validity can be coherently associated with a model of power-laden contexts of

⁹⁰ There are several places in which Habermas acknowledges the entanglement of power and validity and, therefore, that his social theory -and specifically his theory of colonization- does not "offer an innocent image of "power-free spheres of communication" (1991, p.254). See Allen (2007) for detailed references of those places.

interaction in which the transcendental validity of claims remains latent. I have introduced the topic of how a socio-theoretical model of context-dependence and context-transcendence would seem on the recent basis of current discussions that compatibilized Habermas' moral universalism and Foucault's contextual nihilism but said nothing about how such would implicate from a normative political-theoretical point of view. At this point, Habermas' perspective provides the pivotal basis inasmuch it gives a more general standard of rationality of the practices that could entail the critical-normative force to overcome given socio-historical blockages for human interaction. Nevertheless, his approach must be assessed in accordance with the awareness that it is impossible to sustain a critical and political perspective of those problems without considering the situatedness of reason that characterizes contemporary social and political critical theory (McCarthy 1991).

Habermas's formal pragmatics is a general standard that reconstructs the pretheoretical knowledge and intuitive assumptions that all human beings employ in communicative actions in all sociocultural circumstances. In accordance with this, it can be idealized that there are specific validity claims to truth, rightness, and authenticity involved in all acts of communication and, moreover, that they are universally implicated in every situation of argumentation. This general and abstract idea of human communicative rationality allows to presuppose that in practical discourses of morality, ethics and politics, there is a transcending force underpinning every situation of daily interactions.

The idealizations of such a transcendental force are portrayed in different ways following the wide range of areas of philosophical discussion faced by Habermas but can be attached to the transcendence function of communication correspondent to three axes: the first one that implicates high standards of argumentation in the capacity of calling into question any notion of given validity; the second one linking the standard of universalization to which any truth or moral claim can be subjected; and the third one by which it is idealized that communication carried within itself the presupposition that all participants are motivated to find the better argument. Habermas conceives that the guarantee contended in these idealizations provides the main source and opportunity for criticizing and transcending the situations in which their failure has been produced.

On that basis, context-transcending validity attaches the process of practical argumentation to the implicit idealizations contained in speech acts. However, many critiques have been raised showing that this direct conjuncture between validity and argumentation is difficult to maintain without paying the price of impracticability (Lafont 2002), excessive rationalization (Wellmer 1991), idealization (McCarthy 1991), faulty over-generalization (Benhabib 1986) epistemic and ethical authoritarianism (Cooke 2006), and even ethnocentrism (Allen 2017). Different remedies have been raised up to contest those charges against the undoubtful achievements of the paradigm shift in philosophy and social sciences produced by systematic contributions of communicative rationality. Habermas himself has varied his constructivist early presuppositions about the idea of truth⁹¹, nuanced most of the risky generalizations and idealizations derived from the early formulation of his famous *ideal speech situation*. Amongst those, and as mentioned, I am most interested in the observations that guide communicative rationality to perform more pragmatically and contextualistically. Instructed in this way, the formal-pragmatics of communication serve as a proven source for “[...] a normative surplus of meaning that critical theorists can draw upon in seeking to transcend and transform the limits of their situations” (McCarthy 1994 p. 21), but its real outcomes and outcomes emerged from the practical, ongoing, and changing circumstances in which “validity claims are redeemed by the grounds of reasons offered in support of them” (p. 75 -76) and not by idealized standards of agreement as such. Paraphrasing McCarthy (1994) here, mainly because any given consensus is always and every case open to be evaluated pragmatically speaking, the force of transcendence remains in the possibilities of every communicative interaction. However, its realizations are dependent on the conditions of social space and historical times that make the “horizon of unlimited validity” reconstructed in the idealizing projections of the critical theorists as not so promissory at times or very achievable at others. In accordance, the universality of the validity claims disclosed by Habermas in the form of a strong claim must be submitted to the intermediate step of its situational possibilities in which socio-cultural contexts that shaped participants'

⁹¹ See, (Habermas 1998); also see Cooke (2001).

needs, desires and interests are unavoidable for the transcendence force of communication. In this sense, McCarthy (1998) remarkably notes that

Given that we must start from where we are, any presuppositions that are practically indispensable for participating in communication processes to which we have no alternative will figure as preconditions of our communication -whether or not they belong to the conditions of possibility of communication as such- (p. 47).

Habermas has asserted in that fashion that validity claims are at the same time context-dependent and context-transcendence (1992 p. 47) and, coherently following that improvement of the formal-pragmatics of communication, Cooke (1994) conveys the notion of *context-transcendent power* for the variety of strong idealizations that the theory of communicative action wants to assure in the practical processes of argumentation. Thus, the paradigmatic insights of McCarthy (1991) lead to the understanding that there is always a gap between the formalized ideals of communication and the empirical realization of the presuppositions latently present in every interaction. That space can only be fulfilled in practical ethical contexts that include the expectations of the subjects and the latent possibilities of understanding each other in every situation. This image of Habermas' the formal-pragmatics of communication sets several important advantages concerning its potentialities as a model of critique that social actors can realistically achieve in the attitudes of interpreting and evaluating their perspectives. Of course, such must go through complicated processes of negotiation and conciliation among social actors that are not guaranteed to be achieved because of the external pressures exerted on communication that obscure the validity basis of communication and complicate a fluid relationship between the formal presuppositions and the practical argumentations. But, what seems to be important here is that Habermas' communicative rationality upholds a well-sustained critical scope that, both in theory and practice, supersedes the limits imputed by many critiques concerning his rationalizations, idealizations and generalizations:

Understood pragmatically [...] the unconditionality of validity claims [...] runs counter to what contextualists critics suppose: it invites and ongoing critique of

dogmatism, prejudice, self-deception, and error in all their forms. The tension between the real and ideal it builds into the construction of social facts represents an immanent potential for criticism that actors can draw upon in seeking to transcend and transform the limits of their situations (McCarthy 1991 p. 5).

II. Critique of distorted communication. Towards a critical approach to the ideology in social interactions.

The historized context of communication

Thomas McCarthy (1991; 1994) takes the theory of communication up to the point of making compatible an ethical-evaluative participant perspective of the critical processes of interaction and opens the path towards the explanation of how exactly the critical theorist can depart from the heteronomy of desires, needs and interests of subjects towards the possible fulfillment of the idealized presuppositions involved in communication. This reveals the important task of diagnosing the socio-historical facticity that meets halfway the practical processes of argumentation. In accordance with the above-mentioned characterization, such is represented in the external blockages that curtail communicative rationality's motivating and justificatory forces. Formal-pragmatics is, therefore, useful for the theoretical support and methodological guidance of the horizon of ethical interpretative and evaluative discourses in which

one may challenge, for instance, the truthfulness of an agent's expression of desires, preferences, feelings, and so forth. When this goes beyond questions concerning insincerity, conscious deception, manipulation, or the like questions of inauthenticity, self-deception, false consciousness, and the like, we may enter into a form of discussion whose paradigmatic case, in Habermas's view, is therapeutic critique (McCarthy 1991 p. 186).

Maeve Cooke (2006) sets out the congruent basis for developing a critical diagnosis and the ethical-political treatment for the problematic phenomena in which the gap between validity and argumentation is unfulfilled by deliberations between practical subjects that

uphold the highest normative standards of communicative rationality. She proposes a reading of Habermas's pragmatics that is both contextualized and historized to ground a critical perspective that is "[...] inescapably conditioned by historical, cultural, social and subjective factors [...]" (p. 14) and that "[...] assumes the conceptual resources necessary to conceive of challenges to the deep-seated, normative intuitions and expectations, which are formative identities in a particular social order [...]" (p. 23). Moreover, Cooke says that

the tension between the normative promise contained in [the] idealizations and what happens in everyday communicative practices provides a basis for criticism: in the one case, they permit criticism of the ways in which the outcomes of argumentation are reached; in the other case, they permit criticism of the outcomes from the point of view of moral validity (2006 p. 47).

Under those premises, the critical power of communication derives into an account of social interaction that affirms immanency to sociocultural contexts and a context-transcending force. The key ethical-political outcomes of this contextualization and historization go back to the scope of social criticism that aims to uncover the pathologies of communication inasmuch it is the analysis of the pragmatical contexts that provides a clear-cut image of the real chances to make critical-transformative power out of communicative practices that involved the moral expectations of subjects. Under this perspective, the analysis of the outcomes of practical argumentation provides an account of a critique of the formal organization of speech, and, the outcomes of the moral validity sustain a view of the quality of argumentations in use by the subjects. This means that placed pragmatically, the communicative rationality employed by the practical subjects can be critically examined in accordance with the socio-historical materiality that burdens interactions and the given representations employed by the subjects as the expression of their expectations involved in the exchange of giving and receiving reasons.

The gap of context-transcending power

For the critical approach to the status of citizenship in current times, that discovery is remarkable inasmuch the interactions of citizens can be scrutinized by paying close attention to forms and qualities of the opinions used in daily life engagements with common concerns. That is to say, the opinions, reasons and discourses linked to the exercise of political matters of citizens can be subjected to a kind of ideology critique of what shapes their reasons in deliberations and those expressions of desires, needs and interests can also enquire following the ethical projections they seek to realize in speech. Such is possible, then, not just because the pragmatic contextualization of the powers inherent to communication but because the situatedness of the communicative competencies of practical subjects requires the consideration of the historical materials that define every situation of communicative interaction. In accordance with this, deliberations of citizens become the practice of dealing with the gap that governs the ideal and empirical process of making communicative power that is mediated by the given socio-historical lifeworld shaping every interaction context. That supports the reasons for having the context-transcending power as a critical political conception of the depoliticization inflicted by neoliberalism that performs as a systematically distorted communication.

Historization of the formal-pragmatics leads to the chances of evaluating both the form of the context in which communicative interaction takes place and the concrete expression of the reasons employed by the subjects involved in those interactions. Critically speaking, this takes the analysis to diagnosis of the social pathologies of communication that, as an innovation guided by the pragmatizing and contextualization of the formal-pragmatics of communication, corresponds to an irreducible gap that always remains between the ideal presuppositions of deliberations and the given representations in use by the practical subjects in argumentations. The implications of what has been said up to this point are that such a gap can be fulfilled by an ongoing process of deliberation regulated by communicative action, in which participants are motivated and justificatory-oriented by following the tracking of their exchanges, or the practical the horizon of communication is filled up with the resources of the given socio-historical world characterized in present times by the totalizing imperatives of systemic integration that installs strategic modes of instrumental action. Having this, the

context-transcending power of communication could only find its way out of the burdens of its historicization through a critical diagnosis of the form of the blockages themselves that curtail its performance.

The transcendental force of contextualized and historicized deliberation

Within the frame of my critical approach to the capacity of citizens to make political power, this problem can be examined as a deficit that affects taking part in social relations with a motivating and transformative force directed against the given rules, institutions, and values. Thus, following Bohman (1996) here, what is important there concerning the “public”, justification and active participation in the *type of reason* one can hear in the problem of general interests that affect certain groups of people. What is important, then, theoretically, is the assessment of the *quality* of reasons exposed in the justification of a claim that supports the given status of rules, institutions, and values and the counterweights practically employed to force its qualification in successfully legitimate ways.

Yet, I seek to argue that opposition and contestation to the given justifications for a given normative structure of action, institutional arrangements, and cultural patterns carry out the force of qualification of reasons and the necessary force to counterbalance the historical tendencies toward depoliticization. In particular, this can be performed practically in the form of validity claims that project strong representations of a good society, as Maeve Cooke (2006) suggested. Public deliberations can be disclosed and unblocked by means of the invocations and claims of strong imaginaries against foreclosed and compelled arrangements. Those types of claims with the force of representing a better situation could have the potential for confronting systematically distorted communications inasmuch they open the opportunity to *contrast* the three conditions of distorted communication as follows: *first*, the external organization of a context of interaction in which the validity basis of the interaction is seized with the unlike the possibility of an internal organization of that validity basis; *second*, the externally imposed process of communicative interaction differs with the chance of the organization of process within an open dynamics of social interactions; and *third*, the repressed or forgotten transcendental validity of communication with the

potentiality of a new productive force capable of renewed interactions, shared beliefs and consensus.

A critique of citizenship politics

Systematically distorted communication expressing in the latter context a social pathology that affects the political capacity of citizens to create communicative power (depoliticization) could have a critical approach as an ideological critique by employing the functionalist-observer perspective by which the organization of speech is colonized from the outside to inside. However, this perspective could restore the suspicion against classical approaches to ideology charged with, first, assuming a dubious external vantage point of view for its critique from which the effects of ideology are overestimated as a corrosive mechanism of political interaction (Eagleton 2008; Cooke 2006a), and, second, displaying an epistemic authoritarianism that underestimates its practical objective necessity to participate in the dynamics of social interaction (Cooke 2006b). Thus, a critical approach to politics that assumes the distortion of communication as the core of its normative reflection must be more profound to describe the practical processes in which political interaction problems display and the possibilities at stake for the participants themselves. This is the path opened by James Bohman when he claims that analysis of systematically distorted communication should focus on the *type of reason* and the *quality* of the claim presented in public deliberations. A conception of critical politics based on communication could be, in this sense, attempted to the flows of communication that occur in everyday life having the socio-historical diagnosis of the external organization of speech as its critical impulse, but, at the same time, it retains its commitment to the analysis of the praxis without failing pray of renouncing to the chances of finding expression for the context-transcending force of communication.

Following Bohman (1996; 1992), distorted communication happens in practical interactions as evident disconnections between meaning and validity, between meaning and intention, and between speaking and acting in which relations of domination are maintained. This is, for example,

A promise, say of equality, is not ideological when it is simply violated, as much as when it is left standing and yet does not bind those with power in their subsequent interaction. In the opposite direction, an expression of desire becomes ideological when it cannot effectively bring into public discourse the needs and desires of the poor, the oppressed and the colonized. The theory of ideology identifies such pragmatic mechanisms for distorting the structure of meaningful speech in the service of power (Bohman 1992 p. 700).

Thus, a critical approach to citizenship politics aims to deal not only with the forms of organization of speech but also with the concrete expressions of disconnections that refrain from domination from discursive testing in deliberations. For installing this perspective, the gap that governs the ideal and the empirical in common daily life interactions must be brought back into the attention, and, a closer look to the political representations of the citizens that carry out with such a gap must be given. The aim at grasping this finding of the critical-transcendent validity could enlighten in which situations the unavoidable political representations that citizens invoke for participating in interactions contend enough communicative power for disclosing the motivational force and orienting the justificatory courses of argumentation.

III. Repoliticizing communicative interactions. On the critical-transcending power of the political re-presentations of citizens.

Representations of the good society as the raw material of critical politics

Relying upon an productive interpretation of Laclau's political theory that describes the field of politics as a constant struggle for political power, Maeve Cooke (2006b) suggests a comparison of the tension that defines the gap -in Laclau's terminology- between *transcendent ethical objects* that appear as complete incarnations of a "fullness of society" - such as "liberal democracy", "human rights", "national socialism"- and particular *political representations* of those universalized objects. For Laclau, political representations are constitutively inadequate for the case of embodying the universality that is projected in ideas

that incarnate the “fullness of society”, however, the relationship between the inadequacy and its appearances as full representations of the transcendental object is *necessary* and *impossible*. This logic confirms that there is always a gap in interactions that by virtue of its incommensurability, drives the logic of politics as practices of negotiating and concealing with inadequacy of the representations of what is good in society. That is to say that particular claims linked to objects that represent generalizations of an ideal of the good in society make the logics of politics as such.

In the context of his late theory of hegemonic politics, the relations between the universality and particularity related in the logics of impossibility and necessity of ideology asserts the emptiness of any transcendent ethical object -such as truth and justice- and the lack of complete self-constituency of the subject. Therefore, Laclau offers an ontologizing perspective of the logic of particularly representing transcendental objects as an always presence of ideological distortions that unavoidably conduct the political relations. For this case, Laclau unmistakably claims that is always a gap that avoids the compliances between political representations and transcendental ethical objects and, in fact, he states that for a democratic logic politics “[...] everything turns around the possibility of keeping always open and ultimately undecided the moment of articulation between the particularity of the normative order and the universality of the ethical moment” (2006b p. 81-82). For Laclau, political representations mediate the complex dialectical tension between universality and particularity that defines his analysis of power and domination in the contemporary world as a theory of hegemonic politics. He remarkably provides a broad notion of politics as a space driven by contingency and heterogeneity of the power relations, discourses, and practices that portray as constant antagonisms by political agents whose identity is completely defined by their particular *representations* of universal ideas concerning the good -and the bad of society- in accordance to historical situations in which there are multiples forms of support and opposition to a regime of domination.

In that sense, political representations are the core phenomenon of discursive social relations in which a gap between universalized ideals and particularized realities are to be found jointly steering the opinions, claims and assertions of subjects judging the given

historical order(s) of power. These representations are made out of a transcendental ideal of the good society represented by a particular subject that actualizes the field of politics as the social sphere of contesting power(s). As Laclau remarkably instructs, this form of operation of contemporary politics is always ideological since the gap between the transcendental ethical object standing for the universalized ideal of a good society (and therefore related to the adscription of truth and justice) and its particular representation must be attained by the concrete subject as fully closed up in order to sustain a coherent identification and ground support for her actions in practical life. Thus, ideological distortion is an inherently political phenomenon that cannot be suppressed since it sustains the plurality and heterogeneity of the interests steering complex social dynamics. But, despite the logical necessity of political representations for the dynamics of contestation of power relations, it can be -and must be- subjected to critical theoretical analysis and democratic practical assessment capable of sustaining a normative basis of politics without falling prey to descriptive cynicism. Clarifying the political scope of the gap between particular representations of a transcendental ethical object that defines the field of the power struggles, the question concerning a critical account of the practical political reflection in which such a contemporary dynamic takes place is: how exactly the context-transcending power can be retained in that logics?

The <<ethical investment>> of political representations

Laclau's (1996) reading of George Sorel's revolutionary myths that are necessary for revolutionary actions offers an interesting view of a particular ethical nuance that is implicated in the logics of representations steering the political field. For Sorel (1975), "we do nothing great without the help of warmly-colored and clearly-defined images, which absorb the whole of our attention" (p. 164-165)- Laclau reads this and the category of "revolutionary myths" as a kind of ethical compromise that portrays and excess of representation by virtue of intentionality that goes beyond any given particular desire, need, or interest by establishing a practical connection with the transcendent ethical object that could be in fact differentiated as productive, creative, or even stimulating for others. Accordingly, Cooke's (2006b) reconstruction of the stances offered by Laclau about the

Sorelian revolutionary myth suggests that there are “[...] imaginary constructions that inspire human beings to battle against the existing state of affairs” (p. 87) and that these counter-productive images, yet shaped by the representation of transcendent ethical objects, but now contrasting with the existing social order contend a motivating power that defines an ethical investment in certain forms of political representation. Laclau himself recognizes that there must be some sort of active moment consisting in this ethical moment that could be analyzed as part of the problem of human agency when he says that “[...] the moment of the ethical is the moment of the universality of the community, the moment in which, beyond any particularism, the universal speaks by itself (*Identity and Hegemony* p. 80); but, he does not instruct about the *types* of connections that could enquire in such moment. Laclau limits himself to say –already mentioned- that “[...] everything turns around the possibility of always keeping open and ultimately undecided the moment of articulation”, the specific active relation between that “community” apprehended counter-productively in the ethical moment and connected with its universalized fictive projection is not clear in its account, and, therefore, both the possibility of a critique of ideological distortion itself, and, the chances of normative guidance for subjects is overlooked.

That problem concerns a crucial point for the assessment of ideology as distortions that are part of political interaction and its implications concerning any possibility for the opening and maintenance of the gap between the ideal and real that is fictionally concealed. As it is evident, the opening and maintenance of this gap in practice runs the possibilities of democratic social interactions open to pluralities, attentive to differences, and, responsive to challenges; that is to say, a political community in which deliberations bring in and take out the necessary conditions for its frequent stabilization. Accordingly, it is essential to understand how practical subjects can realize the inherent gap of political representations and how it can be attained as a source of opportunities for disclosing and orienting the gap by means of practices that ethically invest in political representations for the sake of tying off the motivational and justificatory forces of communication. For these reasons, it is important to consider above all, as Cooke (2006a), against Laclau’s ambiguities regarding the problem of ethical investment that

[...] the subject's striving is not ethically indifferent since his acts of identification -his decisions about how to establish himself as a fully achieved identity- are oriented by a desire for a transcendent object that has an ethical connotation. Thus, by positing a notion of the subject as prior to the social processes whereby he develops subjectivity, Laclau allows for the possibility of intentional agency, by positing the subject as a constitutive lack that searches desperately (though in vain) for a signifier that can fully express his identity as an ethical being, he allows for the possibility of ethical agency (p. 85-86).

Moreover, it must be assumed that albeit "[i]deology is a dimension which belongs to the structure of all possible experience" (Laclau 1996 p. 212), it does not provide a full ideological closure that impedes the differentiation of the ethical investment allocated in political representations. It is precisely a differentiation of the degrees of closure evaluated from a practical-participant perspective that can make the distinction between bad forms of ideological closure that curtails the motivation and justification to avoid deliberation what provides a critical account of distorted ideology, and, at the same time, that shows which forms of productive closures trigger persuasive claims that motivate disclosure and orient the openness of processes of justification in argumentations.

Argumentation as the ethical excess of political representations

As mentioned, Habermas's formal-pragmatics also includes a gap between the universal meanings of truth and justice and the validity of claims raised by speakers in accordance with their expectations. Moreover, this theory includes an account of ideological distortions that show the practical processes of argumentation carrying out with that gap reveals impelling extralinguistically forces (in the sense of socio-historical facticity) that do not impede communicative interactions but habituate subjects to a type of communication in which the validity basis contending a context-transcendent power is disconnected from the competence of speakers. And, finally, this situation leads to foreclosure for the pragmatic forces of motivation and justification that curtail opened and ongoing processes of political deliberation. But, aside from that, Habermas also offers a practical insight into social interactions that allows an understanding of the participant's experience of ideological

distortions and also a source for attaching the possibilities of rational critique to such experiences by tracking the course of their expectations in real processes of argumentations.

A contextual reading of those sources provided by formal-pragmatics leads to establishing a paradigmatic connection between context-transcending validity and the practice of argumentation, as Maeve Cooke (2006b) has analyzed in detail. This, however, could still lack contemporary political accuracy if the cognitive moment of making communicative power is not -once more- again attuned with descriptions of the social characters that offer a sharpened analytical view of the forms of constituency, the agency and identity of subjects allocated in highly unstable and variable social order(s) and relations. The idea of political representations of the good society serves to provide that support for the aims of grasping in descriptive terms the internal side of how ideology takes an intrinsic in contemporary political interactions. But, once here, it is again a new point of departure for the critical impulse that seeks to place the context-transcending force of communication in a normative account of today's politics.

Thereupon, formal-pragmatics offers its advantages by characterizing practical argumentation processes as open-ended communicative exchanges that take place under fair and inclusive circumstances. Accordingly, argumentations implicate the kind of projective representations commonly acknowledged in Habermas as the ideal speech situation, including the aspiration of reaching understanding by achieving truth and justice. The *ideal speech situation* can be seen

[...] as the idea of ideal justificatory conditions: it projects the image of a condition in which participants in argumentation would be motivated only by the search for the single right answer, in which only the force of the better argument would prevail in which the exchange of arguments would be considered on their merits (in the case of truth), or all parties affected would be included in discussion and be accorded an equal opportunity to exchange reasons within it (in the case of justice). [...] For the idea of the ideal speech situation projects a condition in which participants in argumentation would

have acquired complete and final knowledge, of the world, of themselves, and of other persons and also perfect mutual understanding (Cooke 2006b p. 105).

In that case, the ideal speech situation poses more as a regulative idea that, if applied to the logic of political representations of truth and justice could be seen as attuned to the inherent gap between the ideal and the real that steers the field of contemporary politics. But, there is no need to go into that parallelism between Laclau and Habermas, as even Cooke (2006a) dedicatedly advocates, if one is seeking to appreciate the normativity politics that by its own right is allocated in the direct connection between formal-pragmatics that formulation of the ideal speech situation and the practices of argumentation. By virtue of its situated character and pragmatical traits, communicative rationality can maintain its presuppositions even in the difficult terrain of distorted communication as a latent force at the disposition of the subjects who engage in deliberations of their concerns. Assuming this, argumentation could be seen by itself the process that guides the engagement of ethical investments. Of course, the dependence on political representation becomes necessary as a point of departure or foreclosure for ethical investments as long as the reasons offered by political subjects disclose motivation and/or recall justification to deliberate, be that political representations are seen as necessary for keeping the power relations on its given circumstances by the course of the distortions of communication. In any case, the situation of communication that is derived from the functional logics of political representations can be measured by the degrees of motivation and justification implicated in argumentations; that is to say, that can be examined in accordance with the openness, inclusiveness, and fairness of political deliberations.

Repoliticization as disclosing motivation and orienting justification

Following the latter, judging political representations from their implications in practices of argumentation tied them to a perspective in which they can perform, on the one hand, as pernicious ideological closures of political interaction and, on the other hand, as productive commitments expressed in claims that disclose motivational force and orient justificatory efforts to engage in deliberations. These two distinctive functions of communication linked to productive, ethical investments in political representations of the

good society provides the explanation for the normative account of politics that is closely tied to the context-transcending power of communication in power-laden contexts of interaction. Suitably, those two functions of language operating at the cognitive level represent the sources for a counter-balance power against the depoliticization inflicted on social interactions through the delingusitification that curtails motivation and narrows the justifications for engaging in deliberations.

The function of language disclosure is commonly linked to privileged experiences in art and religion that provide the sense of a power that has been unveiled for the subjects who experience the disclosure. Adorno's famous account of aesthetic disclosure explains, following a model of experiencing a work of art, that "discursive language wishes to express the absolute in a mediated way". Also, Derrida speaks on the perception of a "ghostliness" that is felt as a vertigo that appears when an attempt to go beyond the given is intended. Aesthetic and philosophical accounts of the function of disclosure are common, but in everyday communication, they also appear in the surprising effects of non-intentional or non-expected actions, spontaneous associations of memory and present objects, and intelligent metaphors employed to recall a situation. These are the materials used by creative and innovative social moments and activists when they seek to call the attention of public opinion on some issues of their interests. These kinds of uses of recursive language are helpful precisely for the problems of awakening attention, denouncing a situation, growing responsiveness, and increasing public appearance. Thus, the function of disclosure carries out the motivational force from which any process of making communicative power could derive.

For its part, the function of justification is the appropriate expression of processes of practical argumentations in which "yes" or "no" stances lead to the performing of reasons that support the positioning of a speaker. Justification is the function to which Habermas has dedicated most of his attention and to which a major part of his developed idealizations is closely connected with his accounts of modern legality, post-conventional morality, and democratic politics. Justifications always perform a validity claim, call for the acceptance or rejection of someone else, and, determine derived actions as a consequence. For Habermas,

justificatory processes implicate actions oriented towards the reaching of mutual understanding (*Verständigung*) oriented historically by the achievements of evolutionary learning processes that have found expression in the democratic principle (“D”) of the modern law, the principle of universalization (“U”) that defines discourse ethics in post-conventional societies. Justificatory argumentation processes are regulated by commonly counterfactual presuppositions implying that everyone capable of speech and action can participate in argumentation processes, criticize what is said and complemented, and recognize the force of the better argument and bind to it. Evidently, these presuppositions cannot be found as realized because of different reasons, and, therefore, the support of the outcomes of the evolutionary learning process -such as *human rights*- is necessary to orient the development of justifications that keep argumentations open-ended, fair and inclusive.

The functions of disclosure and justification uphold the critical-normative criteria for politics by virtue of their intrinsic characteristics. Technically, they express the crucial moment of ignition of deliberations in social interactions that guide the participants towards reaching common agreement, and, accordingly, this closely tied to the process of making the communicative power necessary for an account of legitimate politics. As part of this, disclosing the motivation and orienting justification becomes realizing such a critical normative potential inherent to the context-transcending force of communication. Repoliticization of the social interactions that have been pathologically blocked as a delinguistication of the citizens' competence to understand each other and make common power thus becomes a practical task of disclosing and orienting that potentiality. As argued, this is not something abstract, idealistic, or derived from a vantage point of view that guides a normative account of politics since the sources of its occurrence are in the inherent features of daily communicative practices. It is not something that all can always do because the pressures of social complexity and dynamism make that empirical stance certainly impossible to judge; moreover, it is not an envisioned practice that could hold hopeful expectations regarding rapid or great change since the process of curtailing by distorting the critical functions of language have been severely repressed in our times. However, this dissertation could be an account of critical citizenship that under in the times of

depoliticization of social interactions, actualizes its meaning in practices of making communicative power from the actions aiming to the disclosure of the motivational force and the orientation of justification of communications. As it could be seen, once again, the nucleus of the idea citizenship corresponding to the *conflicts* and *rights* over political autonomy finds expression in the two functions of language performed in repressing times. The realization of the political autonomy of citizenship depends on awakening expectations *against* the given social-historical order and *guiding* the processes of justification seeking to establish shared beliefs with the aid of the normative principles that support equal freedom for all the members of a political community.

IV. Deliberative Re-presentations of the Good Life: On the practices of a repoliticizing citizenship.

The discussion framed upon the representation of the good life included in the political interactions now leads to the final stage of responding to the normative and practical implications of such an account of deliberative critical politics. In the last part of Chapter 2, I have referenced a few cases that reflect socio-historical of contemporary political claims to which the analysis of political representations as part of a conception of the making communicative power today can be applied in order to establish the criteria for characterizing the means of qualification of current political claims and for differentiating which ones can pose as legitimate in front of to the illegitimate ones. As mentioned in that context, the political claims can only be assessed by the type and quality of the claims that contend an interpretation of needs, desires and interests produced in the social complexity of neoliberal capitalism. These conditions can now be associated with the levels of deliberative tracking force that a claim can disclose and guide. Accordingly, there are ways of making sense of differences and judging the levels of depoliticization of citizenship by the capacities of certain forms of representation that motivate deliberations more than others.

For our times of such extreme waves of depoliticizing effects produced by neoliberalism, the sources of cognitive motivation that a claim could generate is the only critical chance at this stage. It does not mean that there are other forms of given practices of

critical politics -such as the ones capable of a great refusal of the existing totality that invites nothing different than resistance to unsurmountable moral circumstances- and other ideal practices that make more than just disclosing and orienting a justificatory process -such as active participation on the process of decision making in mini-publics and communitarian work, or even in the influencing of official agendas by means of the participatory mechanisms provided by the states-. But, I want to clarify that the main outcome of my analysis is that for the specific circumstances of neoliberal depoliticization of the capacities of citizens to produce a common political will, the motivational force of communication is what upholds most of the hopes to get on the track of finding political solutions to the problems we faced today in our capitalist form of life such as the re-legitimation of democratic political systems, the consensus on the ecological crises and the issues link to migration and war.

Deliberative re-presentations of the good life

Deliberative re-presentations of the good life are those claims that interpret the needs, interests and desires of citizens against the affectation stemming from the given socio-historical status quo with an ethical investment that can include other desires, generalize its needs also for others and reflect a common source for the causes of the claims. All this is carried out within deliberations that are opened in the antagonism of social conflicts triggered by agendas of claiming of a particular political movement. Because of this, deliberative representations of the good life can realize the content of political autonomy that the normative core of the double-edged conceptual nucleus reconstructed in Chapter 2 reveals. These political representations directly aim to the ethical recognition of the claims by means of likely making of a common political power and can generate enough justificatory tracking because they reflect the problems produced by the social complexity of capitalism, at the same time that social conflicts are involved in the agendas of defending and conquering legal rights.

To make sense of this account of politics that implicates use of the deliberative representations of the good life, it is important to remark that:

- All political representations are representations of the good life, but not all political representations are deliberative re-presentations of a good life.
- Deliberative re-presentations of a good life liberate communications (the context-transcendence force) from the systematic distortions induced by neoliberal processes of depoliticization in all the levels of social life.
- Deliberative re-presentations free communication by disclosing the motivational basis of human speech and guiding the justificatory commitments involved in hearing and speaking.
- Deliberative re-presentations are the raw material of the *repoliticization* of social interactions in our contemporary damaged form of life.

Successful examples are yet to be judged by their impact on the future of our current form of historical capitalism. However, we are now in the position of judging which of the cases analyzed before, among others, could be in a better position to perform such a normative standard of political deliberation. The difference between the left-wing political movements and the right-wing ones in our current times relies on the form of the that: (i) performs a negation of systematic threats to the lifeworld on which other actors can also rely, (ii) speak of an abstract “we” that calls for deliberation of who is included, (iii) uphold a certain level of openness and ongoing practice that recognized the gap between the achievements and what is yet to realize in their politics of struggle. By virtue of these features, a political movement could fight against the depoliticizing effects on political claims that induce enclosure, self-referentiality and irreflexivity of claims representing an idea of the good for solving their necessities. Moreover, those features could lead to a practice of *repoliticization* that implicate the chance of articulating and assembling other representations of the good under the guidance of justificatory process that grants the making of common political will.



The tags, slogans and statements “Not One Woman Less! Free, Alive and Un-indebted We Want Us”, “#SOSWeAreBeingKilled”, “We all are children of Coffee”, and, also others like the ones perform globally to claim for the changes that must be carried to fight against the ecological crisis, or like the ones that mobilize people against the precarization of work, or the ones that claim for activism in favor of the care work, these all likely carry out representations of a good life that fulfill the standards of qualification of a claim that trigger deliberations.



All in all, the most significant cases I want to recall for exemplifying the ways of qualifying the claims contending political representations of the good life are the ones that correspond to the situation of the feminist movement “Ni una menos” in Argentina, the indigenous social movement CRIC and the student and agrarian political movements taking place in Colombia. As mentioned, “Ni una menos” has proven the capacity to frame its claims today in matters such as the damaging effects that financial debt inflicts on social reproduction, which has the potential of reflecting the conditions of qualification for a deliberative political representation. Financial debt is one of the most efficient ways of colonizing lives -as Lucy Cavallero and Veronica Gago (2021) remarked- by neoliberalism in the context of Latin America. It undermines desires by regulating the satisfaction of needs and imposes interests following the economic rationality of being in debt. This an objective dynamic of the financial market that is part of the social reproduction of millions of citizens and promised to demand the efforts of a long-term agenda of transformative politics that involved different progressist actors, as it has become visible recently for the feminist with the election of the neoliberal anarcho-capitalist president Javier Milei.

Alike the protest against violence that have taken place in the recent context of Colombia’s history reveals a source of possibility for change that includes -as Alejandra Azuero suggest (2023)- new forms of epistemically considered a reality of a Latin American society where the predominance of uncontested force has dominated for very long time. The claims to disclose the means of repression of the state and the mafia’s contended in the cited “#SOSWeAreBeing Killed” reveal a practice of systematic violences, in which citizens from all the strata of the social world can feel identified and implicate an agenda of demanding future transformation of the state and the social order. Something similar is exposed in the claims of agrarian actors that have sought to call attention of their necessities by saying that they are the producers of a resource that benefits the generality of the nation and, therefore, the struggles for social justice that involve fair conditions of production should be claimed by many. Here as well a motto such as “We are all children of the coffee” reveals a context of oppression that is inflicted by the affection dynamics of the justice of international markets that can concern the interest of many citizens and promised an agenda of redefining the

relations between the dependency of food production with the foreign markets of capital. The case of the indigenous movement CRIC of the south of Colombia claims an invitation to speak (“If we keep quiet, they kill us. And if we speak, too. So, let's talk!”) to transform the regime of dominance and oppression against indigenous communities significantly displays an important possibility for the positive implications of the deliberative political representations. The indigenous social movements are one the most powerful actors to produce social conflicts and claim recognition at the same time that sustain a politics of permanent protest that seeks to confront big extractivist economic actors that destroy nature and other social actors that undermine their cultural autonomy (Jaramillo 2018; Laurent 2022; Jurado et al. 2023). This is carried out by an agenda of participation in institutional and non-institutional spheres, looking for the ethical recognition of their identitarian difference and the recognition of the historical conditions of exclusion to which they have been subjected since colonial times. By proposing significant reforms, defending their rights to the protection of land and articulating through the years with other social movements, their claims to speak also reflect the conditions of possibility of the deliberative political representations.

These are all very different types of claims than the ones fueled by the political representations of the authoritarian, right-wing, and reactionary political movements in our times. Claims about the stealing of elections that motivate assault on democratic institutions, as in the US Capitol Assault by Trump supporters; interpretations of the political necessities that call for military intervention, as happened in Brazil with the loss of election of Bolsonaro; and, representations of crises made out from non-contrasted information, as it happened in the spread of conspiracy theories about the Covid-19 vaccines across the world; all this claims do not offer the same chances of qualification reflected in the definition of deliberative representations that disclose and guide a justificatory process communicative interaction. As mentioned, the efficacy of these claims precisely relies on the enclosure, self-referentiality, and unreflective status of their messages, which opposes the source of openness, interaction and critical interrogation of publicly exposed argumentations.

Repoliticizing social interactions, therefore, means the practice of citizens realizing the political autonomy that is reflected in the normative nucleus of its contemporary definition. Recalling here the importance of reconstruction performed in the first part, for a qualified practice of repoliticization it is needed to attend to the four dimensions of the double-edged nucleus that includes the claims for rights by means of the social conflict *and* the aim towards the ethical recognition of the claim through the capacity to invoked the caused of the problem produced by the imperatives of neoliberal capitalism. We can only appreciate this in some contemporary progressist agendas, as argued. But, there must also be clarified that there is no guarantee for this model of repoliticization that highly relies on the virtues of the justificatory processes of deliberation to ensure or precisely identify the success of any existing political agenda of claims for advancing to the full realization of political autonomy against the current form of historical capitalism, from the perspective of the critical thinking that remains undecidable and, as Nancy Fraser has remarkably recalled, that sets the important task of making critical sense even of the agendas or claims with emancipatory and real transformative potential.

I hope to have contributed to clarifying that by developing an analysis that situates the precise moment in which the expectations for the capacities of making change in our difficult historical times can be established and the tools by which we can follow the paths of certain related courses of action. It has been done by taking into consideration that even the motivations that have already produced a great example of reform by performing social conflicts and conquering the entitlements and provision of rights in the immediate past could lose tracking force for achieving full ethical recognition of their claims and producing profound systematic transformation of the structures of the social world. But anyhow, we can remain attentive to making and having a clear distinction for assessing the appearances of the political agendas of changes currently available.

There can be, thus, clear that there are at least three general models of today's citizenship politics that seem to perform agendas of claiming by proposing social conflicts and even calling for the acquisition of the entitlements and provision of rights, but neither the reactionary agendas that propose a (“re”)politicizing agenda in false appearance nor the

reformist agenda that re-politicize partially and conformist fulfill the criteria of a strong normative and real *repoliticization* of social interactions. The reactionary agendas perform no more than a mere opposition and contestation to the given that is capable of even threatening the basic grammars of stabilization of universal rights. The reformist agendas mainly aspire to achieve the protection granted by the means of the constitutional state and usually end up disarticulating the motivations of the struggle and fragmenting the justificatory force of deliberations that create common shared beliefs. Usually, this is contested by arguments that believe in an unproven and unrealistic qualification of the struggles, abstractly saying that the struggle must remain open in processes of permanent agonism and constant contestation. But, there is no substantive, critical or reconstructed criteria to guide that believe practically.

In contrast, we can distinguish here a model of *repoliticizing* citizenship that is characterized that qualifies the political struggles by taking into consideration the realization of all four dimensions of the double-edged nucleus of citizenship as political autonomy in a context of blockages inflicted by neoliberalism. This model performs an account of critical politics based on the communicative capacities of citizenship for making a common political will. Its most important feature is that it emphasizes the function of disclosure and justification that triggers the motivational force of interactions that can be directly reflected in the expectations that citizenship represents in the political claims that produce our complicated contemporary reality.

Concluding remarks

Several remarks can be extracted from the intended systematic analysis of a long-lasting problem such as citizenship from a critical approach that considers -all together- the normativity of the idea, the historical mediations of its representations, and, more distinctively, the social problems linked to its incomplete realizations. The idea of citizenship reveals itself a very unstable notion that, despite the many philosophical traditions and the diverse sociological notions, could be formally reconstructed. In this sense, the reconstruction of the modern idea of citizenship could be placed in the critical tradition of subjective freedom as essentially linked to the idea of self-legislation and, more specifically, attached to the institutional recognitions of rights and the moral claims steering social conflicts through history. Citizenship becomes a critical concept when it is assimilated into both socio-institutional mediations and normative expectations. In this sense, citizenship provides a clear theoretical basis for detaching the idea from the classical pure normative contents that can be found in the philosophical traditions of liberalism and republicanism. However, it also allows the analysis of this sociological scope to go beyond specific formulations that remain attached to a particular socio-cultural context, ethnocentric history, or governmental regulations. Accordingly, citizenship gains theoretical accuracy with its formalization as an idea that expresses the autonomy that the members of a political community warrant in rights and, at the same time, the autonomy that certain social groups morally claim to achieve recognition of their interests, desires, and needs.

The theoretical reconstruction provides, then, an analytical basis for enquiring about a given historical status of the normative content ascribed to the idea of citizenship as political autonomy and, following the procedure of diagnosis of the social pathologies, the blockages that curtail the realization of the normative content of moral freedom in a historical moment is apprehensible. Thus, citizenship can be productively enquired within the socio-institutional regime of capital accumulation that mediates its realizations, regulates its forms of appearance, and damages its performance. As a historical form of capital accumulation, neoliberalism offers a very revealing negative socio-historical status for realizations of the normative content of citizenship as political autonomy. It has directly curtailed and distorted

citizens' political competencies to identify, recognize, and participate in the political community seeking to make a common political will.

However, the negative effects produced by neoliberalism must be adequately framed and understood as a social pathology of depoliticization. The blockages inflicted on the political autonomy of citizens do not only indicate a crisis of democratic-political systems -as most of the available literature suggests-but also produce a diminishing of the political capacities of citizens to engage in the process of deliberation and political argumentations with enough track to arrive to a common understanding. In this sense, the phenomenon of depoliticization of social interactions must be adequately enquired in a theoretical framework that grasps the specific contours of interactions curtailed by neoliberalism. Depoliticization must be sharply understood as a problem that affects the action and discourse of citizens to engage in deliberations.

Habermas's theory of communicative action offers the appropriate theoretical framework for dealing with the phenomenon of depoliticization since its *colonization thesis* gives the socio-analytical tools to describe the latent processes of affectation of social interactions by the systemic dynamics of late Capitalism; it reveals the specific pathological dynamic inflicted to communication, and, it does so without losing the normative core of the human competences to understand each other as a resistant force of that remains latent in the idealizations of communication. Accordingly, I offer an interpretation of the phenomenon of depoliticization as a delinguistification of social interactions that operates as a *systematic distortion of communication*. Putting together the fragments that can be found in Habermas' oeuvre about the pathologies of communication, I achieve an understanding of the internal process of distortion of communication and, more importantly, couple this critical diagnosis with a critical-normative perspective that highlights the sources for counterbalancing the problems caused by depoliticization.

Following available pragmatical, contextual, and critical insights into Habermas's theory of communication, there is a context-transcending force in communication that always remains available as latent residue in social interactions despite the external pressures exerted by systematic distortions. That critical force of communication could be allocated to

understanding the process of communicative power in which its internal stages are revisited. There is a cognitive moment of the process of making communicative power that reveals the moments of curtailing. However, it also sustains chances of disclosure and motivations capable of creating free communicative interactions.

At that point, the analysis that concerns the citizens' competence for making power through communicative deliberation gets to a decisive moment in which the analysis of the political representations as the raw material of political interactions can gain a communicative perspective. Communicative power can repoliticize contemporary social interactions when the context-transcending force that remains latent in everyday daily life is appreciated in different forms of public-political representations that disclose the motivational force to engage in deliberations and guide ongoing processes of justifications—following the standards of Habermas's *formal-pragmatics of communication* that is possible appreciating the inner ethical gap between the transcendental idealizations guiding communications and the given needs, desires, and interest that impel human interactions.

The latter perspective on contemporary political interactions is one of crucial importance for current critical social movements that across the world keep the political horizon of struggles opened by envisioning, propelling, and articulating certain forms of representation of the good life beyond the foreclosure of public deliberation driven by relativism, adaptation, and segmentations of human -and non-human- needs, interests and desires. Those contemporary critical political struggles can be reflected in this account of politics that reveals the capacities for making communicative power, diagnoses the blockages inflicted by the given socio-historical world, and designs the sources of resistance to the damaging effects of communication. At the same time, contemporary political struggles could be recognized within the frame of the long-lasting idea of citizenship that has been reconstructed within the frame of an emancipatory political perspective for our times.

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