

citizen is entitled to call the shots for another, to dictate to them what they must think or how they must deploy their share of political power. In matters of politics, democratic citizens look each other in the eye.³

Even though no one gets to boss another around about political matters, citizens are *responsible* to one another. They are, after all, equal partners in a cooperative endeavor whose success is mutually beneficial. They therefore have obligations to one another. Moreover, their political interactions thus must reflect the fact that they are equals, each sharing responsibility for democracy. They must behave in ways that express an appropriate regard for the equal political status of their fellow citizens.

The democratic moral idea of political equality hence gives rise to certain standards of conduct. We can refer to these standards collectively as democracy's *ethos*. It is an ethos in that it involves moral standards for citizens, standards that supply a basis for praise and blame, admiration and reproach. Yet it is also *public* in that, insofar as possible, the requirements it identifies apply to individuals understood *as citizens*. That is, the ethos does not specify moral requirements for persons as such. In a democratic society, the larger questions about what makes a human life good, valuable, meaningful, or proper are generally left to the individual conscience. These are questions to be addressed by religion or philosophy in its broadest sense, not politics. Although the expectation is that the requirements of democratic citizenship will be compatible with the comprehensive moral systems that citizens may adopt, the ethos of democracy sets a moral standard of conduct for persons *in their role* as citizens only.

This ethos comprises both duties and virtues. Duties and virtues are distinct moral categories. They work in different evaluative registers, one might say. Duties specify certain acts that must be performed (or omitted), while virtues are commendable character traits. Failing to satisfy a duty typically is wrong; it renders one blameworthy and perhaps liable to sanction. Falling short of

a virtue, however, is not so much *wrong as bad*; it renders one reproachable, nonadmirable, and possibly corrupt. Given this distinction, my claim is that democracy's idea of political equality gives rise to a view of the actions that citizens must perform (duties) and the sensibility—the dispositions and attitudes—that they must embody (virtues). Satisfying the requisite duties and manifesting the appropriate virtues are required for showing due regard for the equality of our fellow citizens. Democracy's ethos hence sets a standard for proper citizenship.

2.1. Duties of Citizenship

Begin with our duties as citizens. The central consideration is straightforward: one way in which citizens acknowledge one another's political equality is by doing their fair share of the work of democracy. After all, democracy requires effort. Elections must be held, offices must be filled, laws must be passed, criminal trials must be conducted, institutions and infrastructure must be maintained, and so on. In short, democracy is a group endeavor, and those who are citizens of a functioning democracy but do not contribute to it thereby free-ride on the political labor of others. Free-riding is a way of using others as a mere resource for one's own purposes. It therefore involves placing oneself above others. By free-riding, one fails to regard one's fellow citizens as equal; one disrespects their equal status.

Consequently, the democratic ethos includes a range of duties. These are requirements to contribute one's share to making democracy work by participating in the collective tasks without which it could not persist. As citizens, our duties include the familiar political actions that we recognize an obligation to perform. For example, we tend to think that voting, serving on a jury when called to do so, and paying taxes are things that citizens ought to do. We also acknowledge that, within certain constraints, citizens are

under a general obligation to obey and uphold the law, and to defend the country.

This list of the duties of citizenship is not exhaustive. A complete account would include duties associated with reporting crime and cooperating with criminal investigations and prosecutions, perhaps by serving as a witness in a trial. Furthermore, there is a duty to report, challenge, or otherwise call attention to political corruption, to be a whistle-blower. To these one might add duties to aid, assist, or rescue citizens who are in various kinds of danger, what are sometimes called *Samaritan* duties. There may also be related duties to occasionally volunteer or contribute to charitable organizations and the like. Arguably, as theorists of civil disobedience contend, citizens also have a duty to stand up to certain forms of social injustice, even at considerable personal expense. Perhaps there are conditions under which it is also a citizen's duty to stand for political office and serve if elected.

We need not attempt a full account of the duties of citizenship. Remember the narrow scope of the current argument. The point is to register a narrow, and I should think noncontroversial, thought: the duties of citizenship identify the actions it is necessary to perform if one is to contribute one's fair share to the collective project of maintaining a democratic society. Contributing one's fair share to the common endeavor is a way of *taking responsibility* for one's democracy, and this is a necessary part of respecting the political equality of one's fellow citizens.

Accordingly, when a citizen fails to satisfy these duties, she does wrong and therefore renders herself liable to criticism. There are circumstances, of course, where such failures are *excusable*, in which case criticism may be inappropriate. More importantly, not all of the duties of citizenship are equally weighty. In many democracies, neglecting to vote is considered a relatively minor dereliction—occasioning a modest fine, or simply the disapprobation of others—while other failures are treated as criminal offenses. Again, these complexities needn't detain us. My point is simply that

failing to satisfy the duties of citizenship constitutes some degree of wrongdoing. The wrong is committed against one's fellow citizens.

Yet this does not capture the full import of our political equality. In performing the duties of citizenship, we contribute our fair share to the collective endeavor of democracy and therefore avoid *disrespecting* fellow citizens. But respecting others as our equals is not simply a matter of omitting behavior that disrespects them. Treating fellow citizens as our equals has a *positive* dimension as well. We are required not merely to avoid violating the equality of our fellow citizens; we must also *acknowledge* them as equals.

To do so, we must perform the duties of citizenship with a certain *temperament* or *sensibility*. We must bring to our political behavior the dispositions and attitudes that are appropriate for an individual who is engaged in a cooperative endeavor of self-government among equals. In short, in order to complete our picture of what it takes for citizens to regard each other as equals, we need to devise a conception of the virtues of citizenship.

2.2. Virtues of Citizenship

To see more clearly why a conception of virtue is needed, we must take a step back. Although democracy is self-government among equals, it nonetheless involves exercises of coercive power by some over others. In this respect, democracy is like all modes of politics. The difference is that democracy involves the claim that its exercises of coercive power are consistent with the political equality of those who are coerced. In other words, democracy is the proposition that you can be forced to accede to rules that you reject, yet retain your status as an equal. It is the claim that there's a kind of coercive force that's not mere *bullying*. That idea might strike you as puzzling. It *should*.

In order to think this through, we need to bring the puzzle into sharper focus. Observe that unanimity is seldom required in order

to make a legitimate political decision in a democracy. Although decision rules vary, in most democratic contexts, all that is needed for a decision to be reached is a *plurality* of votes. When a democracy decides, then, some get the result they favor, while others are expected to comply with a result that they did not support. Should those who do oppose the prevailing outcome decline to comply, they render themselves liable to sanction. In fact, we think that democratic government is *right* to force compliance.

Democratic citizens thus are sometimes required to comply with results and decisions that they do not support and might see as objectionable. On such occasions they are coerced, forced to abide by policies that they would otherwise reject. As this coercion is directed by the political activity of their fellow citizens, they are hence forced to obey the collective will of others. This looks like a simple case of subordination—some call the shots for others and compliance is enforced. Democracy claims that coercion of this kind is legitimate, so long as it is the product of democratic processes. The puzzle is how this arrangement could possibly be consistent with the claim that citizens are political equals.

Full exploration of this puzzle lies beyond the scope of the present discussion. From what has been said, though, it is clear that in performing the duties of citizenship, we are not only contributing to the collective task of making democracy work; we also are helping to determine how power will be exercised over our fellow citizens. We are helping to determine how the democratic state will coerce *our equals*.

This is enough to suggest that the office of democratic citizenship involves a moral dimension beyond the requirement to avoid free-riding on others' political labor. We are duty-bound to contribute our fair share in maintaining democracy, but we thereby participate in an arrangement that forces our equals to comply with policies that they may oppose. To be clear, exercising power over one's subordinates raises moral questions that are familiar to anyone who raises children or supervises employees. But these are of

a different kind from the questions provoked by democracy, where power is exercised over our equals. We should conclude that the role of citizen is not to be taken lightly. It is a *moral office*.

This enables us to see an additional way in which citizens must recognize one another's equality. They must dispatch the duties of citizenship with a sufficient acknowledgment that those activities carry a certain *gravity* because they involve the exercise of coercive power over their political equals. In other words, citizens must bring to their duties a certain moral sensibility. Citizens must embody what I call the *virtues* of citizenship.

Before exploring these virtues, another comment is in order about the narrow scope of the argument. Democratic theorists are fond of devising ambitious theories of "civic virtue," the traits that render a citizen an exemplary contributor to democracy's thriving. A complete theory of democracy certainly needs an account of what makes for excellent citizenship. My purposes are more modest. I am not concerned to provide an account of exemplary citizenship, but only to provide an account of what it takes for citizens to treat one another as political equals. The broader category of civic virtue is not in play. My task rather is to identify the *virtues of citizenship*, by which I mean only the traits that citizens must manifest if they are going to wield their political power in a way that duly acknowledges the equality of their fellow citizens. Three such virtues are central.

First, there is the virtue of *public-mindedness*. This is the disposition to perform the duties of citizenship in a way that manifests a concern for the *common good*, rather than strictly for narrowly conceived interests. It can be added that public-mindedness also involves the closely related disposition to seek justice and oppose injustice in political matters, even when one's own particular interests might recommend otherwise. The public-minded citizen recognizes that in performing the duties of citizenship, she is playing a part in directing the state to exert power in ways that impact *all* citizens; hence she endeavors to bring to her political activity an enlarged perspective.⁴

Second is the virtue of *reciprocity*. As their views about how power should be exercised are to be informed by consideration of the common good and justice, citizens need to formulate their political opinions *in light of* the perspectives, values, and concerns of their fellow citizens. This means that democratic citizenship calls for a willingness to engage in a reciprocal exchange of political ideas, a disposition to weigh competing considerations, a tendency to be open to objections and challenges to the views we favor, and a readiness to revise our views in light of others' perspectives. We acknowledge our fellow citizens' political equality by trying to formulate our political opinions in a way that acknowledges that our views must be the product of a give-and-take of ideas among our fellow citizens. The virtue of reciprocity is the disposition to formulate one's political views in a way that reflects a willingness not merely to allow others to speak, but to give them a hearing. We manifest the virtue of reciprocity when the views and concerns of others contribute to our own thinking.

The third virtue of citizenship is *transparency*. When deciding how to instruct the democratic state to deploy its power, citizens must not only think in terms of the common good and justice in a way that reflects a due consideration of the views of others; they must also seek to formulate their political opinions in terms that other citizens can recognize as intelligible, even if not altogether convincing or decisive. That is, citizens must endeavor to craft their political views in ways that refer to values that are commonly shared among democratic citizens. If one's political ideas are going to be the upshot of a reciprocal exchange of ideas, parties to the discussion must try to offer reasons that the others can recognize as such. This kind of transparency is required if, when citizens find that they favor opposing views, they can see one another as engaged in a *disagreement* over the common good rather than simply a conflict.

These three virtues exhibit a certain unity. We must be transparent in order to manifest the virtue of reciprocity, and reciprocity is necessary for realizing the virtue of public-mindedness. Put

differently, if we are going to exercise our political power in a way that is public-minded, we need to exchange political perspectives with our fellow citizens, and such exchanges themselves must aspire to proceed from common ground. Thus, a failure to manifest any one of these three virtues generally will result in a failure to manifest the other two. Given this relation, the three virtues of citizenship are jointly necessary for duly recognizing political equality. Moving forward, it will be less cumbersome if we capture them together with a single term: *civility*.

The virtue of civility is composed of the dispositions to be public-minded, reciprocating, and transparent. We can say, then, that in order to duly recognize the political equality of one's fellow citizens, one must perform the duties of citizenship in a way that manifests the virtue of civility. More simply, citizens are required to be civil to one another when fulfilling the duties of citizenship. In the absence of civility, democratic politics becomes simply a matter of directing and deploying power, and the idea of self-government among equals is lost.

Though it is handy, the term "civility" presents difficulties. It is sometimes used to denote a calm or concessive demeanor, a disposition to avoid conflict or seek conciliation for its own sake. Civility in this popular sense requires deescalation, courtesy, and conciliation in the face of disagreement. According to some views of this kind, it also requires that one manifest positive affect or a sense of community toward those with whom one disagrees.

This is not the sense of the term that I intend. Although civility in the popular sense might be admirable in some general way, it is not a virtue of citizenship—it is not a requirement for manifesting a due regard for the equality of others. This is because self-government among equals involves disagreements over some of the most important things, such as justice, freedom, autonomy, dignity, and the like. Democracy is often an uneasy enterprise. Heated tones and antagonistic demeanors are to be expected when citizens are taking democracy seriously.

Accordingly, by *civility* I mean the combined profile of the three virtues of citizenship: public-mindedness, reciprocity, and transparency. Civility in this sense involves no imperative to avoid conflict or seek appeasement. Civility is consistent with hostility and rancor; one need not *like* others in order to duly recognize their equality. Congeniality and fondness are not necessary for civility. All that civility requires is that citizens do not lose sight of the fact that their fellow citizens are their political equals, who are therefore *entitled* to an equal say. Civility in this sense is consistent with political antagonism, even some degree of enmity.

2.3. Fitting the Pieces Together

I have been arguing that the democratic moral idea of political equality gives rise to a corresponding ethos composed of both duties and virtues. I recognize that the discussion has covered a lot of ground quickly. So let's take a moment to fit the pieces together.

Begin from the basics. In a democracy, citizens are political equals in the view of their government. Yet they are also one another's equals. They must treat one another accordingly. One way in which citizens treat one another as equals is by contributing their fair share to the collective task of maintaining democracy. There thus are duties of citizenship, requirements to perform the various civic tasks necessary to make democratic government work. To fail to perform these tasks is to free-ride on the political labor of others. This is to treat one's fellow citizens as less than equal.

However, making democracy work involves more than maintaining its institutions and participating in the processes that produce political decisions. These activities almost always involve directing the coercive power of the state. This poses a puzzle: in a democracy, political power is power exerted among equals. More precisely, it is power exercised *over* one's equals. The duties of citizenship thus must be dispatched in a way that reflects the moral