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Revitalizing citizenship: contributions from the feminist philosophy of care

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Abstract

One of the main features of the globalized world in which we live is the increasing loss of sovereignty of nation states and the overlap of political versus economic discourse. Given this phenomenon, the alternative proposals seem to point in two directions: on one hand, the necessary implementation of global, political and democratic institutions, and, on the other hand, the consolidation of participatory citizenship to revive democracy. I will focus my analysis in this second line of work. Following Martha Nussbaum we can say that the real crisis is not the economic crisis we are living since 2008, but the crisis of the values of a participatory citizenship, the basis of democracy. The presentation will analyze the contributions of a philosophy of care to revitalize citizenship. The experiences of women in the practices of care are a legacy that goes beyond the private sphere to the public sphere, nourishing and motivating women participation in the field of civil society, informal politics and peacemaking. This report shows how the ethics of care in which women has been traditionally socialized has been a key driver for the active participation and commitment of women in civil society. Caring is presented as one of the practices of active citizenship. This report will put into dialog feminist researchers as Selma Sevenhuijsen or Joan Tronto, with peace researchers like Betty Reardon or Elise Boulding in the quest of a reconstruction of care as a political value. In Spain more than 75% of the volunteers (in NGO, and different organizations) are women, in the world most of the people inside feminist, ecologist and pacifist movements are women. The basic moral concepts of an ethic of care, such as commitment, responsibility, empathy or interconnection are fundamental to the establishment of a participatory citizenry, ultimately, a healthy and vibrant civil society. Different authors are increasingly taking into consideration this contribution, and new interesting concepts and proposals arose, like the one of *caring citizenship*. We find new forms of democratic action which integrate care as vector axis, placing care at the center of a participatory democratic politics. The report will conclude with an educative proposal in order to transform caring into a human value and not merely a gender value, in order to achieve a more participatory democracy and more committed to peace building.

Author Biography

Professor Irene Comins Mingol is since 2009 Co-Director of the International Master and Doctorate in Peace, Conflicts and Development Studies at the University Jaume I (Castellón, Spain). Since 2001 she has been the Academic Coordinator of this Master Program. She is full-time lecturer at the Department of Philosophy and Sociology at the

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Doctor by the University Jaume I, with the Doctoral Dissertation “La Ética del Cuidado como Educación para la Paz” she received the prize award in 2003 to the quality of her PhD dissertation. She has performed research at the Department of Peace Studies at Bradford University (United Kingdom), and has published about Philosophy for Peace, Philosophy of Language, Peace Education, Anthropology for Peace, and Gender Issues. Her recent publications include a book on care ethics and peace education (entitled *Filosofía del Cuidado: Una propuesta coeducativa para la paz*; Barcelona, Icaria, 2009), an entrance devoted to Peace Universities at *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, and the article «Coeducation: Teaching Peace from a Gender Perspective» (*Peace & Change*, 2009, vol.34, nº 4) among others chapters of books and international articles.

She is also member of different international associations related to peace and gender studies like WILFP *Women’s Internacional League for Peace and Freedom* or *Nonkilling Philosophy Research Committee* of the *Center for Global Nonkilling* (CGNK) Hawaii University.