

Introducing . . . Cultural Citizenship

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In most discussions of globalization, the four-pronged structure of social scientific knowledge (economy, polity, culture, and interiority) remains undisturbed. That structure is supposed to provide an analysis that allows for unevenness and discontinuity in social life. Instead, it frequently homogenizes processes, such as the effects of globalization—the “g word”—through a supposedly neat, interlocking set of tendencies: universal penetration of everyday life by the market, erosion of the nation-state, diffusion of Yanqui culture/*le défi américain*, and psychological/legal universalisms. This homogenization often fails to address dominant, residual, and emergent global trends, and messy intersections between these categories of thought. A more critical interrogation of globalization signals the inadequacy of this worldview and calls for the interpenetration of all four ways of knowing.

This special issue addresses themes that crisscross the globe and the disciplines. The problems described demand postdisciplinarity. Something more, however, holds the following, seemingly disparate, topics together: corporate-sponsored races for “the cure” (Samantha King); the Afro-Brazilian music third sector (George Yúdice); Pakistani women’s street theater (Fawzia Afzal-Khan); diasporic Chinese in Panama City (Lok Siu); gender in India’s nation-building narrative (Usha Zacharias); and the utopian projections that flow from Mexican maquiladoras (Melissa W. Wright). They all activate what is coming to be known as “cultural citizenship,” a textual, political, and activist category that flows, I believe, from transformations taking place as part of the g word. So where did culture meet citizenship? I suggest that three overlapping concepts have characterized the discourse of citizenship: the political, the economic, and the cultural, with *migration* the governing term today.

Political citizenship permits voting and appeals to representative government and guarantees physical security in return for ceding the right to violence to the state. Its founding assumption is that personal freedom is both the wellspring of good government *and* the authority of that government over individuals. In Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s paradox, this involves “making men free by making them subject” (Rousseau 1975, 123). As developed through capitalism, slavery, colonialism, and liberalism, political citizenship has expanded its reach and definition exponentially since

the eighteenth century, though it remains unevenly spread across the globe.

Economic citizenship covers employment, health, and retirement security through the redistribution of capitalist gains and the use of the state as an agent of investment. In the words of Australia's prime minister during World War II, John Curtin, "government should be the agency whereby the masses should be lifted up" (quoted in Van Creveld 1999, 355). Economic citizenship emerged from the Depression and decolonization as a promise of full employment in the First World and economic development in the Third. Today, it is in decline, displaced by the historic policy renegotiations of the 1970s conducted by capital, the state, and their intellectual servants in economics that redistributed income back to bourgeoisies. Or put another way, economic citizenship is available only to corporations, via tax breaks and other welfare subsidies.

Cultural citizenship concerns the maintenance and development of cultural lineage through education, custom, language, and religion and the positive acknowledgment of difference in and by the mainstream. This discourse developed in response to the great waves of cross-class migration of the past fifty years and an increasingly mobile middle-class culture-industry workforce that has been generated by a new international division of cultural labor (NICL). The NICL favors North over South and capital over labor, as film and television production, computing, and sport go global in search of locations, skills, and docile labor. Within the NICL, certain cosmopolitans embark on what Aihwa Ong (1999, 112–13) calls "flexible citizenship," a strategic making-do that seeks access to as many *rights* as possible while falling prey to as few *responsibilities* as possible. This conduct matches corporate trends of globalization. It alienates those who wish that others had an affective, allegedly nonsectarian relationship with the state as well as an instrumental one (though the latter might be regarded by institutionalist political science as an exemplary instance of interest-group pluralism or lauded by neoclassical economists as market-style shopping!) (Aleinikoff 2000; 132, 145). Meanwhile, away from the capitalist class and the salariat, those affected by the division of labor in manufacturing and agriculture seek rights to communication in the new media. Of course, many migrant workers around the world are "temporary" or "undocumented" workers—neither citizens nor immigrants. Their identity is quite separate from both their domicile and their source of sustenance, and they are guaranteed equitable treatment not by sovereign states, but through the supranational discourse of human rights, and everyday customs and beliefs that superintend the legal obligations of conventional citizenship (Shafir 1998, 20, 19).

Put another way, we might say that whereas classical political theory accorded political representation to the citizen through the state, the dis-

tinctively modern economic addendum to this was that the state promised a minimum standard of living, provided that the citizen recognized a debt to the great institutions of welfare. The decisive postmodern guarantee is access to the technologies of communication. The latter promise derives its force from a sense that political institutions need to relearn what sovereignty is about in polymorphous sovereign states that are diminishingly homogeneous in demographic terms and increasingly heteroglossic in their cultural competence. Contradictory accounts of the citizen emerge from the presumption that the work of executive government is to tell the people why they should be faithful to it, while claiming their considered acceptance and support as the grounds for its own existence (Miller 1993).

This is especially true in the multiple identities of the citizen-consumer. On the one hand, the government places great faith in the now putatively universal capitalist system, which necessarily produces inequalities of income and operates via the desiring machinery of utility maximization. Some confusion results from the need to yoke together the rational citizen, who thinks of the greater good of the greater number, and the rational consumer, who valorizes him- or herself. They are both called up inside the one subject, who must be taught to distinguish between public goods, where one person's consumption does not preclude another's, and private goods, where it does. Now that many forms of publicly expressed identity have emerged from a combination of expanded human and civil rights discourse and expanded niche marketing, globalizing and privatizing norms merge with forms of consumer targeting to produce new kinds of civic life. Opportunities for marginal groups to express themselves (freighted though they may be by the vagaries of institutional recognition) and fears for legitimacy on the part of hitherto dominant social classes amount to a double movement of renewal under the sign of citizenship within a civil society that "exists over against the state, in partial independence from it" (Taylor 1990, 95).

In the case of the articles gathered here, we see both these trends at play. The dossier covers new responses to dispossession and dislocation (alternative Pakistani theater as a counternarrative to the exclusionary forces of postmodern capitalism and traditionalist nationalism; *las chinás en Panama* expressing diasporic fealty through the Western discourse of beauty pageantry); new forms of consumption (Afro Reggae as a corporation, a nongovernmental organization, and a social movement; breast cancer activism as a feel-good substitute for rationally funded research); and novel forms of ambivalence and instability vis-à-vis the nation-state (Sita's shifting place in India's national story, and labor's move against the nation's self-fulfilling promise).

This is not always a positive picture—as we read in King's essay. For

the cultural need not be a sign of unmitigated pleasure for progressives. One crucial issue is whether, in ethnomethodological terms, cultures permit people to say, “Please don’t include me”—in other words, can membership categorization devices (MCDs) be refused? This is where any culturalist project of radical democracy must make its peace with liberal political philosophy (LPP). LPP argues that the state should recognize the right of individuals to be respected as citizens and also as members of a distinct culture, because deciding to participate in that culture may be in their interest for collective or personal identity (for example, exempting Sikhs from British motorcycle helmet legislation because of their need to wear turbans). The state can and should intervene, however, when members of those cultures seek to opt out, when MCDs become oppressive (for example, when a British woman rejects her Muslim parents’ plans for an arranged marriage). This is a double bind—cultures should be protected from *external* oppression, even as their members must be protected from *internal* oppression (Johnson 2000, 406, 408).

We need to reconceptualize the three forms of citizenship as interlocking zones, interdependent and equally important—not just in terms of individual access, but as measured by political participation, economic development, cultural norms, and tastes. Second, immigration and the NICL must be centered in deliberations that look to those who are disenfranchised from citizenship and consumption through a global commitment to workers’ rights inflected with questions of cultural exchange.

The technology of citizenship, of shared rights, has been the principal arguing point shared by modern movements of emancipation. The idea that political rights are granted to all through birth has animated the claims of every category of the oppressed since the eighteenth century. Even so, the struggle once won has rarely satisfied. Equal access to citizenship has not led to social justice for all, because of the propensity toward economic anarchy and political oligarchy and because the discourse of justice increasingly presumes a space of autonomy between person, economy, and polity, rather than a policy of assurance by the last on behalf of the first, or some other variant. For this reason, Iris Marion Young (1990) proposes “group-differentiated citizenship.” She acknowledges the value of universalism in terms of “a general will and common life” but is critical of the exclusion from dialogue of a raft of groups under such totalities. Too often, the notion of citizenship functions as a “demand for homogeneity.” This can be avoided if access to political decisions is institutionalized for all categories of person, however different (Young 1990, 117–19, 126).

In any event, citizenship is no longer easily based on soil or blood. Rather, it is founded on some variant of those qualities in connection with culture and the capitalist labor market. And the state is no longer the

sole frame of citizenship in the face of new nationalisms and cross-border affinities that no single governmental apparatus can contain (Feldblum 1997, 96, 98–99, 101, 110). Supranational citizenship and identity are tied not only to a new international division of labor but also to a new trading order, in which juridically established trading blocs like North American Free Trade Agreement/Trato de Comercio Libre, the Mercado Común del Sur, and the European Union make decisions that override national laws—often to empower some states over others and some citizens over others. In fact, awareness that the rule of law transcends the nation-state can lead to a more compelling supranational identity, as witnessed by the number of cases brought by individuals to the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights (Cohen 1991). These actions were feasible because of cultural citizenship’s uptake as a crucial site of governmentality. Therein lies promise for a radically different politics.

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