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Citizenship

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Although we tend to think of citizenship as something national, originally the *citizen* was simply a certain kind of someone who lived in a Greek *city*: a member of an elite class who was said to be capable of self-governance and therefore of the legal and military governance of the city. But the ancient history of the term tells us little about the constellation of rights, laws, obligations, interests, fantasies, and expectations that shape the modern scene of citizenship, which is generally said to have been initiated by the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century (B. Anderson 1991; B. Turner 1993; Mouffe 1995). Most simply, citizenship refers to a standing within the law (this is often called *formal* citizenship); *jus soli* citizenship allots citizenship to people born within the geographical territory, and *jus sanguinis* awards citizenship by way of a parental inheritance.

At the same time, citizenship is a relation among strangers who learn to feel it as a common identity based on shared historical, legal, or familial connection to a geopolitical space. Many institutional and social practices are aimed at inducing a visceral identification of personal identity with nationality. In the United States, this has often involved the orchestration of fantasies about the promise of the state and the nation to cultivate and protect a consensually recognized ideal of the “good life”; in return for

cultural, legal, and military security, people are asked to love their country, and to recognize certain stories, events, experiences, practices, and ways of life as related to the core of who they are, their public status, and their resemblance to other people. This training in politicized intimacy has also served as a way of turning political boundaries into visceral, emotional, and seemingly hardwired responses of “insiders” to “outsiders.” Thus we can say that citizenship’s legal architecture manifests itself and is continually reshaped in the space of transactions between intimates and strangers. The term *civil society* is often applied to these scenes of *substantive* citizenship, though discussions of civil society tend to focus only on the rational aspects of communication and interaction that contribute to the state’s reproduction of mainstream society, and not to the ordinary affective or interactive aspects of social exchange (Habermas 1999).

The concept of *sovereignty* is a crucial bridge between the legal and the substantive domains of U.S. citizenship. This term presupposes a relation between the nation’s legal control over what happens in its territory and the presumption that citizens should have control over their lives and bodies, a condition of limited personal autonomy that the state has a responsibility to protect. But the promise of U.S. citizenship to deliver sovereignty to all of its citizens has always been practiced unevenly, in contradiction with most understandings of democratic ideals (Rancière 1998). The historical conditions of legal and social belonging have been manipulated to serve the concentration of

economic, racial, and sexual power in the society's ruling blocs.

This shaping of the political experience of citizens and noncitizens has been a focus of much recent scholarship and political struggle. These discussions contest the term *citizenship* in various ways: *cultural citizenship* describes the histories of subordinated groups within the nation-state that might not be covered by official legal or political narratives (T. Miller 1993, 2001; Ong 1996; R. Rosaldo 1999); *consumer citizenship* designates contemporary practices of social belonging and political pacification in the United States (Shanley 1997; Cronin 2000; L. Cohen 2003); *sexual citizenship* references the ongoing struggle to gain full legal rights for gendered and sexual minorities (Berlant and Warner 2000; Cott 2000; M. Kaplan 1997); and *global citizenship* describes a project of deriving a concept of justice from linkages among people on a transnational or global scale (Falk 1994; Bosniak 1998; Hardt and Negri 2000). This list could be vastly expanded. Patriotic citizenship, economic citizenship, and legal citizenship have all been shaped not just within a political public sphere, not just within the logic of mass culture and consumer capitalism, but also within a discussion among various collective interest groups struggling over the core norms, practices, and mentalities of a putatively general U.S. population.

The histories of racial and sexual standing in the United States provide the clearest examples of the uneven access to the full benefits of citizenship. But historically citizenship has also shaped less recognized kinds of distinction. Central among these is that U.S.

citizenship has always involved tensions between federal and state systems. Indeed, for most of U.S. history, state citizenship had priority, and the history of civil and suffrage rights centrally involved arguments over the relative priority of state versus federal law. For example, the 1967 Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia*, which deemed it unconstitutional to forbid marriage among heterosexuals identified as being of different races, nullified "anti-miscegenation" laws not only in Virginia but in thirty-seven other states as well. In so doing, the Supreme Court argued that it is a general rule of U.S. citizenship that marriage cannot be governed by racial restrictions. Prior to that, states were more important than the nation in determining the racial component of legal marriage among heterosexuals, as well as in many other sexual, familial, and commercial matters, including the legal standing of Mormon, lesbian, gay, and women's marital practices, age of consent, marital rape, reproduction (e.g., abortion, surrogacy, and adoption), and child protection.

Given these complex legal and social histories, U.S. citizenship may be best thought of as an intricate scene where competing forces, definitions, and geographies of freedom and liberty are lived concretely. Citizenship is the practical site of a theoretical existence, in that it allows for the reproduction of a variety of kinds of law in everyday life. It is an abstract idea on behalf of which people engage in personal and political acts, from cheating on taxes to pledging allegiance to fomenting revolutions. It is also, importantly, an ordinary space of activity that many people

occupy without thinking much about it, as the administration of citizenship is usually delegated to the political sphere and only periodically worried over during exceptional crises or the election season.

Recent scholarship has pursued this insight into the everyday life of citizenship by exploring some of the most contested scenes in which citizenship has been battled over in U.S. history: immigration, voting rights, sexuality, and labor. Immigration and suffrage have been closely linked at least since the U.S. Naturalization Act of 1790 allowed only “free white persons” to be naturalized as full U.S. citizens. Implicitly this act began the shift from a definition of citizenship through the *ownership of property* to citizenship as the *ownership of labor*, since the word “free” in this act defined freedom as not being economically enslaved—that is, free to sell one’s labor in a market for wages (Glenn 2004). The history of U.S. immigrant rights (and exclusions) is thus tied up with desires to control the conditions under which certain populations would be “free” to perform labor in the United States without access to many of the privileges of “free white persons,” such as the vote and the legal standing to enforce contracts (Haney-Lopez 1996; Lipsitz 1998; Roediger 1999).

So, for example, between 1882 and 1952 virtually all Asian immigrants except for a small number of Filipino laborers were excluded from full U.S. citizenship. During this period the United States was also opening and closing the gates to Latin American peoples, especially Mexicans, hundreds of thousands of whom were forcibly repatriated to Mexico a number of times, fol-

lowing fluctuations in capitalists’ needs and white racial anxieties about disease and moral degeneracy, along with the usual and always false fear that “alien” poor people take more from the economy than they contribute to it. The courts adjudicating these shifts veered between using racial science and “common knowledge,” especially in the visual register, as justification for discrimination (Honig 1998; Jacobson 1998, 2000; Roberts 1998). Similarly, arguments for *and* against suffrage for women appealed to common sense, racist science, and biblical authority to protect patriarchal privilege. Suffrage was achieved only when President Woodrow Wilson found it politically expedient to use an image of emancipated femininity to establish U.S. modernity and moral superiority on a global scale (Berlant 2002). Federal and state manipulation of voting rights continues to threaten the representation of many citizens, especially the poor and the incarcerated.

The same pseudo-scientific rationales that maintained white supremacy in the performance of U.S. citizenship were also crucial in shaping reproductive law. It may not seem a question of citizenship when a court determines, as it did in the early twentieth century, that it is proper to sterilize women deemed mentally ill, intellectually limited, or epileptic. But the presumption was that these women would be incompetent as mothers and would pass their incompetence on to their children, and that the nation would be burdened by the social and economic costs of reproduction by the poor. Poor women and women of color, especially African American and Native American

women, were isolated by this juridical-medical ideology: in California, until the late nineteenth century Native American children could be taken from their families without due process; until 1972, the State of Virginia routinely sterilized poor women without their consent if their offspring were deemed vulnerable to taking on a “degenerate” form (Ginsburg 1998; Stern 1999b). These examples demonstrate that certain perquisites of citizenship, such as the material experience of sovereignty and sexual “privacy” (a modern development within sovereignty), have often been unavailable to the poor, thereby privileging the wealthier classes and the sexually “normal.”

What connects these cases to the keyword “citizenship” is not that they are denials of state-protected *rights* (there has never been a “right” to medical care in the United States). Rather, the contradiction between the sovereignty of abstract citizens and the everyday lives of embodied subjects has been structured by the administration of class hierarchies alongside formal democracy. So it is no surprise that citizenship norms and laws have been highly contested in the workplace as well. Should places of business be allowed to function by different standards than the public domain? Should the protections of citizenship punch out when the worker punches in? Should there be different rules for free speech and political speech on private property and public property? These and other legal questions of citizen sovereignty are put to the test in labor relations. It was not until the last decades of the nineteenth century that workers won the right to an eight-hour day; and during the post-World War II era many

employers made “concessions” to their workers such as the family wage, health insurance, pensions, and protecting workers from undue physical harm on the job. None of these concessions would have happened without the organizing energy of the labor movement, as we can see when, in tight economic times, corporations renege on contracts with workers and states cut back on oversight of corporations’ economic, environmental, and worker health practices. Most histories of U.S. citizenship would not place worker rights at the center of a consideration of the practice of equality in the law and social spaces. But insofar as citizens and workers live citizenship as an experience of sovereignty in their everyday lives, the conditions of labor and the formal and informal rules about organizing worker demands for employer accountability have to be at the center of the story.

Many other vectors of normative and legal adjudication that have structured citizenship could be isolated and enumerated, such as human rights, family law, public education, military conscription, real estate zoning, tax structure, religion, and various state entitlement programs. Such seemingly separate domains are actually mutually defining. What, for example, has Christianity had to do with U.S. citizenship, given the constitutionally mandated prohibition of an official state religion? While some theorists have correlated the development of modern public spheres with the secularization of the shared social world, this evolutionary liberal model has recently been shattered by a cluster of different arguments: that the founding fathers were installing political modernity within the

strictures of a Protestant morality of conscience; that the history of legislation around marriage, the family, and children has inevitably been influenced by religious movements advocating for and against traditional patriarchal control; that religious organizations have shaped powerfully the historical relation of the public and the private in terms of rights and proprieties; that the development of the welfare state and the civil rights understanding of the economic basis of rights was crucially shaped by religious thinkers (Harding 2001; Morone 2003; Bruce and Voas 2004). At the same time, local communities often engender notions of proper citizenship through churches, schools, and other institutions that involve face-to-face social participation (Ong 1996). The religious question has also been central to the story of the citizenship of Mormons, Native Americans, and many immigrant groups, involving taxation, reproductive rights, free speech, public education, and diverse discussions of the material relation of morality to political and economic concerns.

Many of the progressive developments in U.S. citizenship would not have been achieved without the internationally based struggles of socialism, feminism, and the labor movement. Today the United States feels pressure from other international movements dedicated to transforming its practices of citizenship: religious movements (Christian fundamentalism and evangelicalism, Islam, Catholicism); anti-neoliberalism (anti-globalization movements dedicated to a sustaining rather than exploitative and depleting version of global integration); international legal and policy

institutions (the United Nations and the Hague; Doctors without Borders). While international institutions tend to be oriented toward a one-world model of justice, resource distribution, and peace, there is no singular direction or vision of the good life projected by these movements. Anti-neoliberalism is a *motive* rather than a program, coordinating liberal reformist models of ameliorative activity (environmentalism, welfare statism) with more radical anarchist, queer, anti-racist models of refusal and demand. Global religious movements link anti-capitalist (anti-poverty) messages with a variety of assertions of local sovereignty against the abstract imperialism and general liberality of the modernist state.

Innovations in communication and transportation technology, most notably the Internet, have revitalized and even enabled new inter- and transnational movements, and have often produced new understandings of citizenship (Dahlberg 2001; Graeber 2002; Poster 1999/2005). Local determination is not a major stress-point among Internet utopians: personal attachments across the globe are made possible by the speed of information transmission. The seemingly infinitely expanding possibilities of niche political developments and micro-movements have reanimated citizenship as an aspirational concept in discussions of diverse communities, real and imagined. Thus the nation-state as such has become only one player in struggles over political and social justice, so much so that many states feel threatened by the transnational flow of information and have responded with censorship. Still, the delocalization of citizenship has not made

the world simply postnational. Corporations are like empires; both work transnationally to reshape national standards of conduct. So too the activity of ordinary people to force accountability and to imagine new possibilities for democratic collective life and the sovereignty of people—whether or not they are citizens—continues to revitalize the political sphere everywhere.

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City

Micaela di Leonardo

Raymond Williams (1973) demonstrated the overarching significance of the keywords “city” and “country,” establishing the simultaneously positive and negative inflections of urbanity. On the positive side were the values of learning, light, progress, civilization, cosmopolitanism, tolerance and civil liberties, excitement and sophistication; on the negative lay the countervalues of sin, darkness and noise, corruption and devolution, danger and violence, irreligion, mob rule, and anomie. In short, urban modernity and its discontents.

As Williams noted, these city/country oppositions are always invoked in the service of political interests. Diverse social actors described European and, later, U.S. urban life in ways that shifted and evolved with cities themselves. Troubadours, priests, ministers, and Romantic poets gave way to flaneurs and other urban

observers, who then gave way to social statisticians, settlement-house workers, novelists, playwrights, and painters. The new social scientists and artists took cities and urban dwellers as their research objects, as problems to be solved, and as material to be dramatized. In this thrifty recycling of tropes, a set of symbolic associations arose linking the European and American urban poor to colonized others through their mutual need for instruction from their betters (di Leonardo 1998). The voluminous writings of missionaries, journalists, and reformers in Victorian Britain provided a template for later U.S. constructions of “urban jungles” filled with the “near-savage” poor. Socialist novelist Jack London (1903, 288), in an account of life among East London’s homeless at the time of Edward’s coronation, declared passionately that it was “far better to be a people of the wilderness and desert, of the cave and the squatting-place, than to be a people of the machine and the Abyss.”

The long history of American and U.S. urban imaginaries include the Puritan vision of the blessed gathering of the elect as a “city on a hill”; the revolutionary republican associations attached to Boston and Philadelphia; the new nation’s classically planned capital of Washington, D.C.; and diverse nineteenth-century texts that American studies pioneer Leo Marx (1964) catalogued under the heading of the “machine in the garden.” The nineteenth century brought the westward expansion of the new republic and the rapid growth of New York and Boston; the legal end of slavery and the “great migration” of freedmen and women to northern cities; the rapid rise of capitalist