Introduction: Why Citizenship Studies

PETER NYERS
Department of Political Science, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

This issue marks the tenth anniversary of Citizenship Studies. To commemorate this milestone, we have invited some of the most prominent scholars in the field to contribute to this special anniversary issue. We want to take this occasion to take stock of the last decade of citizenship studies as well as identify important themes for future research. When Citizenship Studies was launched in 1997, the journal sought to establish a new agenda for the study of citizenship. In its “Aims and Scope” the journal announced its intention to “focus on debates that move beyond conventional notions of citizenship, and treat citizenship as a strategic concept that is central in the analysis of identity, participation, empowerment, human rights and the public interest”. Citizenship Studies approached the topic of citizenship from perspectives that were not confined by the categories of a state-centric politics, but saw citizenship as something that should be “analysed in the context of contemporary processes involving globalisation, theories of international relations, changes to the state and political communities, multiculturalism, gender, indigenous peoples and national reconciliation, equity, social and public policy, welfare, and the reorganisation of public management”. The aim of the new journal was to broaden the debate on the meaning, significance, and practices of citizenship. The rationale was simple: “as a theoretically basic concept, citizenship provides new tools for formulating problems and providing practical analysis and advice in these fields”. Given this mandate, the journal has sought to publish papers that “provide links between theory, institutions such as markets and religions, and the analysis of substantive issues”. Ten years ago Citizenship Studies was a participant in changes already taking place with how citizenship was theorized. A decade later, the journal has clearly given substantive shape to changes and developments in study of citizenship.

Our aim in this special anniversary issue is to critically reflect on some of the major issues and debates that have emerged over the last decade as well as to point out some of the new challenges ahead. After publishing ten volumes, 37 issues, 247 articles, and a dozen special theme issues, we feel that the time is right for such an undertaking. The challenge, as always, is to think critically and constructively about citizenship. Over the past decade, Citizenship Studies has been host to some fundamental debates regarding who is a citizen (and who is not); what is citizenship (and what it might become); the contexts of these debates and their implications for policy and practice.
and spaces in which citizenship is enacted (and where it is absent or repressed); and the histories and temporalities under which citizenship becomes relevant (and when it is forgotten or deemed irrelevant). In this regard, the range of substantive issues that have been addressed by *Citizenship Studies* authors is truly impressive. There have been significant breakthroughs in the theorization of citizenship over the past decade. We have seen a proliferation of adjectives to describe the noun citizenship: ecological, global, cosmopolitan, lived, intimate, sexual, postcolonial, multicultural, transnational, etcetera. These conceptual advances, moreover, have been met with richly empirical studies of how citizenship is experienced, negotiated, and enacted in everyday life. The journal has published articles that have theorized citizenship in relation to a wide variety of practices, including migration, religion, education, militarism, indigenous struggles, ecological politics, social justice, surveillance, deportation . . . the list could go on and on. Behind all these theoretical debates and empirical cases, however, is a driving question: why study citizenship at all?

The question “why citizenship studies?” may be disquieting and difficult, but the histories of exclusions, inequalities, hierarchies, securitizations that have been associated with citizenship make the question necessary. Over the years, the articles published in *Citizenship Studies* have sought to expose many of these problematic dimensions of citizenship. One criticism in particular that the journal has sought to address is that citizenship is a concept that is derived from a specifically European lineage and so represents a kind of conceptual imperialism that effaces other ways of being political. To be sure, much of the theorization of citizenship seems to assume a rather narrow world view, and one that brackets out much of world outside of Europe, North America, and Australia. The majority of the world’s population, it would seem, exists only as migratory movements seeking to gain access to the benefits of citizenship in the West. In this sense, perhaps Chatterjee (2004) is right to insist that in “most of the world” the identities and institutions of civil society are reserved for a privileged minority. Members of “political society” may at times interrupt the dominant order with their demands, but they typically do so through identities that are outside of citizenship, civil society, and constitutional political arrangements.

There is surely much merit to Chatterjee’s characterization, and we should be vigilant against the hubris that citizenship is the category through which all people enact themselves as political beings (Hindess, 2004). At the same time, however, the pages of *Citizenship Studies* have clearly revealed that the debate over citizenship is alive and well in countries both inside and outside the West. To be sure, the geographical range covered by citizenship studies scholars who have published in the journal has been quite extraordinary, with articles assessing citizenship politics in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Lebanon, Martinique, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and more. The journal has also sought to publish articles that question the emphasis on national cultures of citizenship. New spatialities and temporalities of citizenship are emerging that do not neatly coincide with the space–time of the modern state. For example, the journal has published analyses of various cities and localities (Los Angeles, Berlin, Kahnawake, Toronto), regions (Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe, Caribbean, Latin America), and border zones of various orders. Perhaps some of the most difficult questions for citizenship lay in its relationship to emerging “spaces
of exception”, that is, the neo-Schmittian nightmare of the global network of Guantanamo. A central theme in this regard will be whether the exception is truly an exception (an aberration whereby liberal society is momentarily and temporarily excused from itself), or whether the exception is a necessary moment for refounding sovereign political orders that make citizenship possible in the first place.

Certainly a great deal of progress will be made in tackling these complex puzzles. In this regard, the challenge for scholarship will be to not only address the institutional and constitutional arrangements of citizenship, but to also examine how citizenship operates as a lived experience. What this often reveals, however, is that for all the innovations in how we conceive of citizenship, the concept remains deeply embedded with practices that divide humanity according to race, ethnicity, gender and geography. As Francis Nyamnjoh puts it in his contribution to this volume: “There has been too much focus on ‘rights talk’ and its ‘emancipatory rhetoric,’ and too little attention accorded the contexts, meanings and practices that make citizenship possible for some and a far-fetched dream for most”.

Thinking about citizenship at a highly contextual level of social practice reveals that citizenship is not just a legal status that is conferred, a gift from the state. Citizenship is something that is taken as much as it is given (Honig, 2001). The struggle is not just about legal status, but for recognition as someone with an audible and corporeal presence that can be described as “political”. To be sure, the act of constituting citizenship involves precisely those acts that mediate between fundamental political questions: for example, unity and plurality, inside and outside, communal and plural, self and other, space and time, and so on. There is a lot at stake with how these relationships are enacted, contested, reformulated, and otherwise put into practice. What’s at stake is no less than the political itself. Ultimately, citizenship should be studied because it is a prism through which to address the political.

With all this at stake, we are delighted that such a distinguished group of internationally well-known scholars agreed to join us to affirm, critically and contextually, the significance of citizenship. Each of the contributors has made significant contributions to the field of citizenship studies, and the essays reflect on emerging developments in the theory and practice of citizenship. The Co-Chief Editors of Citizenship Studies, Engin Isin and Bryan Turner, open the issue with an analysis of the kind of civic virtue and democratic values that might be appropriate for a globalized world. Their call for a cosmopolitan mobility tax is based on the hope that such a move would allow citizenship as a lived experience to cultivate virtues and solidarities that are cosmopolitical in orientation. Seyla Benhabib similarly engages with cosmopolitan political theory and argues that the spread of cosmopolitan norms is actually enhancing popular sovereignty. She puts forward a vigorous argument in favour of a democratic republican federalism that would reinforce popular sovereignty at the local, national, and global level.

Together, these contributions do much to move beyond thinking about citizens as simply a legal status that is monopolized by the state. But as Christian Joppke points out in his contribution, research studies that variously consider citizenship as a rights-, status-, or identity-based concept still “talk past one another”. Joppke’s ambitious task is to try to reconcile these accounts of citizenship with one another in order to allow for connections between each. Ruth Lister contribution explores the tension between the inclusionary and exclusionary dimensions of citizenship, with the aim of trying to enhance the former. Lister argues that as a “momentum concept” that unfolds historically, citizenship can “provide tools for marginalized groups struggling for social justice”.

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Several authors situate their discussion of citizenship within specific territorial contexts. Gerard Delanty explores the politics of European citizenship, and registers some concerns over the lack of solidarity and social justice in this emerging citizenship regime. Writing from the perspective of citizenship struggles in South Africa and Botswana, Francis Nyamnjoh reminds us that for all the innovations in how we conceive of citizenship, the concept remains deeply embedded with practices that divide humanity according to race, ethnicity, gender and geography. For Aihwa Ong, the concern is whether territorial conceptions of citizenship are still relevant, or if citizenship should find meaning in the global flows and movements that characterize our contemporary politics. Ong focuses on the megacities that host global migrations, and theorizes how they become a “zone of mutating citizenship” whereby rewards and punishments are meted out according to the assets they bring to the urban economy.

Finally, what is the future of citizenship? In his contribution, Yoav Peled outlines his concerns that erosion of rights since 9/11 has meant that we are entering a post-citizenship society. Anna Yeatman reminds us that any discussion of the future of citizenship must take into account the complex yet enduring relationship between sovereignty and subjectivity, between the individual seeking self-preservation and the states that seek to legitimate their authority. By emphasizing the conditions of possibility for individual citizenship, Yeatman reveals the complex and enduring interconnection between sovereignty and subjectivity.

Together, the authors demonstrate that there continues to be a wide range of views and critical positions on the topic of citizenship, its significance as a concept and field, and its future. We hope this diversity of views will help generate new debates for the next decade of citizenship studies.

References