



Introduction: Geographies of Everyday Citizenship

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Introduction

This special issue emerges out of the Postgraduate Symposium on Researching Citizenship and Belonging held at the School of Geography, University of Leeds in March 2006. The symposium welcomed participants and

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attendees from all over the UK, as well as Russia, Germany and Spain, and formed an important part of the launch of the Citizenship and Belonging Research Cluster in the School of Geography. The cluster provides a research context to critically examine and respond to the ways in which practices of membership are lived, performed, and resisted in a wide range of contexts around the globe.

This special issue includes some of the papers from the symposium, which had the aim of broadening theoretical debates within and methodological approaches to the study of citizenship and belonging in the context of emerging work within human geography and beyond. The set of papers in this issue represents only a selection of the diverse and multidisciplinary contributions to wider debates on citizenship and belonging – on participatory research, environmental citizenship, positionality, integration and belonging, the arts, policy, and urban design – that emerged from the symposium. The pieces that follow centre on the ways in which rights and responsibilities – new ethical relations – are lived and contested in the spaces of everyday life. In the next section we briefly review some of the classic and recent work on citizenship from political philosophy and geography, and then situate our discussion of citizenship specifically within debates on the political nature of everyday life. We then move on to introduce the set of papers included in this issue, and conclude by issuing a call for further research on the everyday geographies of citizenship, building on the perspectives included herein.

On Citizenship

Two competing approaches have been instrumental in shaping the contours of membership in the political order of the modern nation-state system. First, the citizen appears as an active participant in the public affairs of the polis (Turner, 1990), a classical civic tradition stemming from an Aristotelian picture of “man as a creature born fit for society” and from Rousseau’s notion of the social contract. Second, with the rise of market society, the classical ‘active,’ obligations-based civic ideal was progressively replaced by a modern ‘passive’ or ‘liberal’ ideal, originating in ‘bourgeois’ values of the cities of early modern Europe (Burchell, 1995). The ascendancy of the modern formation of citizenship over the classical model has reduced citizenship to a liberal preoccupation with the formal rights enjoyed by legally defined citizens. This liberal orthodoxy was codified by T. H. Marshall, who conceived of citizenship as expanding categories of rights bestowed on expanding categories of persons. In his seminal work, *Citizenship and Social Class* (1950), Marshall outlined the gradual universalization of civil rights (the right to legal protection), political rights (the right to vote and access to political institutions), and social rights (state-provided entitlements to basic living standards) asserted at the scale of the nation-state (Bauböck, 1994, viii; Joppke, 1999).

The primacy of national citizenship formulated through rights-based liberal discourses has been gradually superseded through a reinvention of 'active' citizenship. This development is closely bound up with geographical debates about the hollowing out, restructuring, and complex 'glocal' rescaling of both the Westphalian interstate system and the global political economy (Mitchell, 2001; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Brenner, 2005; Sparke, 2005). As a consequence of these shifts, citizenship has been reconstituted at new sub- and supra-national scales, leading to a profound shift in the discursive deployment of the term 'citizenship,' as well as in the lived experience of its everyday practices (Desforges *et al.*, 2005, 440). Obligations are now acted out and performed at different scales from the local space of the polling booth, to communities and city-regions, to regional integration and transnational diasporic formations (Brown, 1997; Ong, 1999; Yuval-Davis, 1999; Painter, 2002). The re-scaling of citizenship obligations hinges on the increasing convergence of the socio-cultural dimensions of citizenship and political formalities of rights and obligations at a variety of scales and settings (Painter and Philo, 1995). This process has in many cases deepened unequal and geographically uneven access to political, civil and social rights.

The ways that citizenship has been re-imagined and practiced in different settings are a result of the manner in which definitions of the rights, obligations and membership requirements of citizenship, as well as the discursive and embodied practices of citizenship, emerge in different times and spaces structured by complex conditions (Kurtz and Hankins, 2005). A multiscale understanding of citizenship attends to multiple exclusions, but because exclusion derives from complex intersections of state practices and socio-cultural conditions, citizenship can also be conceptualized as an ongoing process of contestation (e.g., McEwan, 2000). Thus, citizenship is endowed with transformative capacities. Work on the emancipatory possibilities of citizenship has focussed on new forms of mobilities emerging through the rise of global connections such as diasporas (e.g., Appadurai, 1996), transnational communities (e.g., Portes, 2000), and transnational social movements (e.g., Routledge, 2003). This re-scaling and subsequent reinterpretation of citizenship as a dynamic concept has transformative potential because of the openness it has afforded, as the global circulation of people has delinked identity from nationhood and disrupted the isomorphism of culture, people and place. In this intervention we take work on geographies of citizenship a step farther by moving our analysis beyond the stretching and contracting of citizenship into and out of various spaces to incorporate the distinct, yet mundane, spatio-temporalities of everyday life.

Everyday Citizenship

Geographers have argued that places are an ongoing record of social processes that exist at intersecting scales, within which difference is embedded in

the mutually constitutive nature of all spheres of economic, political, personal and cultural life (Massey, 2004). Rather than exclusive categories, all of these spheres contain overlapping and interdependent sets of actions, institutional processes and norms. Citizenship is enacted in places as sites of situated transitory practices, which take shape “only in their passing” (Thrift, 1999, 310). Everyday life is what a growing number of scholars have begun to call these messy, contingent, and undecidable places that constitute and are constituted by our affective ethical relations to others (McCormack, 2003), and this term offers a particularly useful means to think through the connections between the transitory and the familiar.

In her genealogy of the term “everyday life,” Rita Felski (1999) notes that for many Marxist (e.g., de Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1987) and feminist (e.g., Kristeva, 1982; de Beauvoir, 1988) thinkers, everyday life is characterised primarily by the routinization of repetitive and habitual practices within the home as well as in spaces of work and play. The life of the working class, they contend, is impoverished by the encroachment of capitalist social relations into daily life, whilst women, it is argued, are oppressed and repressed by the circular temporal rhythms of social reproduction; both groups can root resistance in a critique of everyday life. Felski (1999) criticises these thinkers for their insistence on seeing everyday life as an always already politicised space. Drawing on phenomenology, and in particular emphasizing its temporal element, she argues that everyday life is “a way of experiencing the world” (Felski, 1999, 31) and is thus no more nor less than a lived process of routinization characterized by the repeating patterns – and regular ruptures thereof – of individual bodies (for everyone’s everyday life is unique). Following Lefebvre, she argues that these classic approaches to everyday life have tended to ignore the fact that the habits of everyday life are not limited to particular classes or sexed bodies; as she states, “no cultural practice escapes the everyday: science, war, affairs of state, philosophy all contain a mundane dimension” (Felski, 1999, 28). She continues, “conversely, no life is defined completely by the everyday...[and it is not] only the elite [that] are free to transcend the quotidian” (Felski, 1999, 28-29). For Felski, everyday life “does not afford any automatic access to the ‘realness’ of the world” (1999, 29), but rather is analytically important because, citing Blanchot (1987, 12), it is “what we are, first of all, and most often.” Writing against the structural-functionalist tendencies of earlier thinkers, for Felski everyday life is significant simply by virtue of its “pragmatic priority” (1999, 29) and thus is essential for us in thinking through how political subjectivities emerge out of taken-for-granted routines, *rather than vice versa*. Ian Burkitt’s (2004, 212) work makes this even clearer:

The production of daily reality does not occur somewhere beyond our reach in, say, the ‘higher’ echelons of the state, and is then imposed upon us. Rather, the reality of everyday life—the sum total of all our relations—is built on the ground, in daily activities and transactions.

For our purposes the everyday is not simply yet another scale, platform or container in which the conception of citizenship can be expanded or contracted. Rather, in this special issue we push discussions on citizenship beyond a fixation with the vertical hierarchies of scaling up or down, and intend in this intervention to foreground everyday life as horizontally emergent or an event-space (Marston *et al.*, 2005, 424) characterized by routinized “complex systems [which] generate both systematic orders and open, creative events.” It is through this accumulation of individual practices that citizenships emerge.

There is a growing consensus that a focus on the material arrangements of the everyday is critical to understanding the wide array of political, social, cultural and economic shifts characterizing much of the world. Feminist geographers and other thinkers have taken “a route through the routine, taken-for-granted activity of everyday life in homes, neighbourhoods and communities” (Dyck, 2005, 234) in order to illuminate the myriad ways that wider relations of power are mediated through the construction of intimate geographies. Yet when it matters politically, the everyday has tended to remain – or be kept – invisible. Alternately, as feminists have argued for decades, spaces of the everyday have been consistently cordoned off from liberal (and illiberal) conceptions of citizenship, produced as a private sphere in which rights and obligations themselves simply do not apply (e.g., Pateman, 1988). The reimagining of the political through the space of the everyday continues to be a key tenet of feminist geography, which has brought a sense of agency and self into contestations of the formal spheres of political action (Kofman, 2003). As Jane Juffer (2006, 39) notes in her recent work on single mothers in domestic space, “the elision of everyday life is the ethics – or lack of ethics – of neoliberalism.”

An excavation of the mundane, habitual, and taken-for-granted facets of everyday life can thus be central to producing knowledges with the potential to transform hegemonic and oppressive spatial understandings and arrangements (Mackenzie, 1989). Haldrup *et al.* (2006), for example, urge us to consider how acts of citizenship as well as exclusion are rooted in everyday sensory encounters and corporeal engagements such as touch and smell. These everyday minute embodied practices collectively generate exclusions and inclusions of immigrants in Danish society. Valentine and Skelton (2007) similarly see the everyday matter of language as a non-state space of embodied belonging and an alternative form of both local and transnational political commitment. By looking at the banal instantiations of everyday embodied citizenship (see Billig, 1995) we can better attend to questions of agency. The limitations that inhere in notions of citizenship, as it is understood primarily as constituted by rights and obligations within a pre-imagined space existing in a structured relation to other spaces, can thus be contested.

If, rather than presupposing the political weight of everyday life, we see it as a lived process within which citizenship acts accumulate, we come closer to understanding how everyday life can also operate as an arena for the contestation and transformation of dominant, often repressive, modalities of citizenship. To make this connection, however, we must understand that ‘everyday life’ is not reducible to the immediate environs of (subaltern) bodies but also captures the vast array of routine relations amongst and between individuals and institutions, relations that can and do cross the globe. In diverse ways the papers in this special issue help us to understand the potential of ‘citizenship’ to be normatively and empirically transformed through the everyday, and thus how obligations dictated by the state and other institutions can be contested, reworked, reimagined, and subverted.

The Papers

Our key concern in this special issue is to explore some of the multiple and interconnected ways through which the quotidian offers a uniquely transformative series of moments in which to renegotiate, contest, transgress, and (re)place the obligations of citizenship. The introduction to the collection re-examines the traditional rights/obligations conception, and offers a starting point for new ways of thinking the political by attending to the embeddedness of everyday practices within wider political bodies (cf. Giddens, 1984). Carme Melo-Escrihuela’s paper utilizes such an approach by considering the emergent body of work around ecological citizenship and the tensions inherent in theorizing it within a framework of citizenship-as-rights and citizenship-as-obligations. To move beyond the rights-duty dichotomy, Melo-Escrihuela seeks to promote a third approach that transcends the individual by contextualizing ecological citizenship within a civil society framework. In this way, she stresses the multiscalar nature of ecological citizenship by arguing that this mode of belonging “cannot be just a matter of personal behaviour, but must entail collective action aimed at producing the social, political, and economic conditions where citizens choose to act, both as individuals and as part of a community, in a sustainable and just way”. For Melo-Escrihuela, attending to the contextualization of individuals within political frameworks – their everyday collectivities – holds an emancipatory potential. She goes on to note, however, that “a focus on collective responsibility and on systemic change, together with a conception of ecological citizenship as a potential agent for such a structural transformation, does not mean rejecting the importance of personal duties and obligations”. Instead, we must attend to the complex, mutually imbricated, place-specific, and embodied relationship between the individual, civil society and the state that occurs in the everyday.

Emma Rawlins’ paper also takes the potential of the individual as her starting point. Attending directly to Saco’s (2002, 205) contention that “the body

has been the persistent yet unacknowledged underbelly of citizenship” (see also Bacchi and Beasley, 2000), Rawlins addresses the nuanced relationship between state and individual by exploring the body as a site through which obligations are contested and resisted in a secondary school in the North of England. In the context of UK New Labour’s neoliberal project, good citizens are responsible for the regulation and monitoring of their own and others’ bodies. Individuals are linked to broader societal practices through mediating spaces and institutions such as the family and the school. The body moves through everyday spaces in indeterminate ways, so its reactions to state discourses, texts, and narratives are unpredictable and potentially politically emancipatory. Thus, as she writes, “the relationship between individuals and the state, although mediated through institutional spaces such as the family home, the school and the community, still allows for the agency of the individuals in making certain decisions”. Acknowledging that the body is “enabled through a whole suite of social, cultural, environmental and political capacities that are inflected into individuals” (Waite, 2005, 411), with specific reference to interpreting and contesting health discourses, Rawlins makes a case for the lively and unpredictable possibilities made manifest in everyday embodied practices.

Natalie Beale’s contribution further explores these themes of the emancipatory potential of everyday life, the contestation of obligation, and ways in which these ethical relations are mediated within spaces of the familiar. Through a reflection on competing understandings of participation this paper skilfully weaves together insights into the methodological and empirical nature of participatory citizenship in contemporary England. By critiquing the disjuncture between young people, citizenship education, and participation, she argues that understandings of ‘participation’ differ as a result of multiple values, aims, and approaches and each is best suited to specific contexts. Through a discussion of her own research experiences she emphasizes the everyday embodied practices of fieldwork which contribute to the emancipatory potential of participatory methods to yield uniquely nuanced data. As she writes, “it is essential [...] to consider the spaces, structures and contexts within which young people operate. This needs to include not only formal spaces and structures such as schools and youth councils, but also the informal and alternative spaces and contexts which young people carve out for themselves”. Critiquing UK New Labour’s citizenship education curriculum, Beale’s paper makes explicit the policy implications, and methodological ramifications, of taking everyday life seriously; as she concludes, “it seems that many young people had not rejected politics; rather they were carving out their own understandings, contexts and spaces of citizenship, politics and participation”.

Catherine Alexander also specifically argues for a *bottom-up* approach to the conceptualization of citizenship. Her paper is drawn from fieldwork with socially excluded youth in low-income areas of Newcastle, England. Alexander argues that these young people, though frequently invisible or portrayed as non-

citizens within state policies and popular discourse, should in fact be understood as active citizens by virtue of their voluntary activities, intimate knowledges of, and everyday engagements with their neighbourhoods. Her characterization of citizenship as a field of struggle, “an arena in which relations [link] individuals to their wider community, social and political contexts”, allows her to contemplate the transformative power of everyday life. Again, for Alexander, taking everyday life seriously as a site of ethical practice and cultural politics can constitute a profoundly transgressive political act, particularly in a New Labour Britain continuously rocked by moral panics concerning its young people. A further feature of Alexander’s approach is her explicit engagement with the discursivity of everyday citizenship through her notion of “crime talk.” Despite the frequently problematic nature of much urban rumour, Alexander argues that “the very process of *talking* about their fearings and concerns about crime, enables young people in Fenham to develop their own sense of place” – in effect, young people chart their own neighbourhood-based citizenship through the circulation of urban utterances. In this way her argument centres on a scalar politics of citizenship in which everyday spaces of belonging are always produced and contested through embodied practice and discursive engagement (see also Dickinson and Bailey, 2007).

The discussion of representation, and the construction of alternative discursive spaces of active citizenship, continues in Jonathan Ervine’s critical analysis of the song *J’y suis j’y reste* by the French band Zebda. Through a careful textual analysis of this track, which brings immigrant and French subjectivities into productive engagement, Ervine reflects on the imaginative geographies of this intersectionality (see Valentine, 2007) and the cultural politics of identity at a variety of interconnecting scales. Zebda’s music “projects a message which challenges stereotypes about suburban France and seeks to reconfigure notions of French identity”. This becomes a means of highlighting exclusionary practices of French citizenship while at the same time acting as a catalyst for protest and change. In this way, music offers an embodied everyday space (Wood *et al.*, 2007) and is used, in this case, for the negotiation of political and media discourses of inclusion and exclusion. Thus Ervine, highlighting the way in which popular music constitutes a salient feature of everyday life, offers an exploration of the circulation of text and its articulation with citizenship, and provides a salient counterpoint to some of the recent emphasis on corporeal, affective, or non-representational registers of belonging, an emphasis that can at times seem partial and limiting.

To Conclude

It is our aim that this special issue will open up further discussion on the vexed question of what constitutes citizenship. Generally conceived of as a set of rights and obligations now decoupled from the space of the nation-state, we would

like to move the critical conversation beyond scalar politics to consider everyday life as an emergent and immanent time-space of ethical engagement – and thus of citizenship.

Our purpose is not to counterpose an approach focused on everyday life with those concerned with rights, obligations, or indeed scale. Rather, we aim to unravel the dichotomy between structural approaches to citizenship and those concerned with the social and cultural elements of identities. Our key assertion is that an engagement with ‘the everyday’ can mediate the apparently dualistic relationship between structural citizenship regimes of the state as a powerfully positioned rational political and economic actor and individuals located in localized, subjective and personal sites of culture, identity and memory.

The work the following papers do is to provide empirical evidence and substantive discussion of how the mundane material arrangements and circulations of bodies, objects, institutions, and discourses coalesce into new ethical figurations of the citizen as embedded in and emerging out of overlapping personal and political surroundings. In doing so, we align this special issue with recent debates within human geography that focus on the simultaneous and intersecting relations constitutive of places (Massey, 2004; Ley, 2004; Marston *et al.*, 2005). Everyday space-time is more than a local cultural or contextual additive to national or supra-national structures, but a site at which both are meshed and remade (Massey, 2005) through the messy and mundane practices of life. For us, citizenship must similarly be interrogated as the outcome of the meeting of myriad personal and political interdependencies, multilocally infused and contingent upon overlapping and interdependent sets of individual actions and institutional processes. In this way citizenship emerges as the radical potential of the non-radical, the democratically mundane, the already here — the everyday.

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