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Guest editorial

Rethinking immigration and citizenship: new spaces of migrant transnationalism and belonging

The contributions to this theme issue engage with contemporary political and scholarly debates on immigration, transnationalism, and citizenship on both sides of the Atlantic. Our intention is not to intervene abstractly, but to juxtapose the findings of our in-depth empirical studies with these debates in order to lay open inconsistencies and offer new conceptual insights into contemporary migrants' lives and immigrant-receiving societies. The papers examine political and public discourses on immigration, as well as migrants' transnational ties and practices, their social and political identities, and their understandings and practices of citizenship at different geographic scales and in different political contexts: Canada and the USA (declared countries of immigration), and Germany and Switzerland (reluctant countries of immigration).

The contributions collected here are highly attentive to how diversity and differences among migrants mediate migrants' transnational ties and their understandings and practices of citizenship. They also take seriously issues of space, in both its material and its metaphorical senses. The papers examine how space is deeply implicated in public and political discourse about immigration; how migrants create new symbolic spaces of belonging in sometimes hostile host societies; how migrants transform material spaces and places in contemporary cities into sites and stakes of struggles for rights and citizenship; and how transnational social spaces emerge as migrants express their political identities and commitments across national borders.

Locating migrants' and host-society narratives, practices, and struggles in the specificities of social and material spaces, and engaging in detailed ethnographic research, makes it possible to understand better the complex and contingent interrelations connecting migrants' transnational ties and practices, identities, immigrant incorporation, and the meanings and practices of citizenship in the contemporary period.

Our interventions here are prompted by political and public debates in recent years about immigration, national security, and the future of the nation and of national citizenship. Concerns about the seeming openness of national borders, migrant transnationalism, the cultural 'otherness' of immigrants, and immigrant integration have been at the center of these debates, catalyzing significant changes in immigration and citizenship policies on both sides of the Atlantic (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003; Joppke, 1999). Particularly since the events of September 11, 2001, migrant transnationalism—that is, migrants' increasing ability to maintain ties and create new social spaces that are multilocal and span national borders—has been increasingly linked to global terrorism. Fears that immigrants, particularly Muslims, are connected with terrorist organizations have led to their increased surveillance, infringements of migrants' rights, and intensified Islamophobia in North America and Europe. In the United States, for example, Muslim immigrants have been unlawfully detained, and, in its attempts to identify and stem the flow of funding for al Qaeda, the US Treasury scrutinized and shut down *hawalas*, the informal banking system based on trust that was the most prominent channel for Somali remittances from US cities.

Transnational migrants are also frequently portrayed as a threat to national cultures and identities (compare Huntington, 2004). Public discourses and conservative politicians and observers on both sides of the Atlantic argue that migrants' cultural difference and presumed unwillingness to assimilate to the culture of the host society endanger the homogeneity and cohesion of national cultures. This is the case even in states that officially claim to support the principle of multiculturalism, such as Switzerland. In their analysis of Swiss citizenship and naturalization policies in this issue, Yvonne Riano and Doris Wastl-Walter show how discourses of the cultural 'otherness' of immigrants and their representation as a threat to national culture and identity, advanced by right-wing nationalist political parties and social movements, directly fed into the formation of immigration policies. For example, in the mid-1990s the Swiss government introduced a priority system based on 'cultural proximity', justified on the grounds that cultural proximity facilitates cultural assimilation. Concerns about immigrants' cultural difference have been increasing across the globe, but the Swiss case is distinct because—along with their utility and value for the national economy—the cultural and racial background of potential immigrants is made an explicit criterion for access to Swiss territory and membership in the Swiss polity. Such a policy creates a de facto racialized hierarchy of immigrants—at the top of which are immigrants from EU member states, followed by Americans and Canadians, and at the bottom are immigrants from all other states. This cultural racism stands in sharp contrast to Switzerland's self-representation as a multicultural nation within the modern state system.

According to such public and political discourses, the cultural 'otherness' and the unwillingness of transnational migrants to assimilate into the receiving society not only threaten to dilute national cultures, but also foster a host of closely associated social ills—for example, unemployment, welfare abuse, crime, and ghettoization. Patricia Ehrkamp's analysis of assimilation discourses by politicians, the media, and native residents in Germany in this issue shows that the perceived ghettoization of immigrants is interpreted simultaneously as a manifestation of migrants' lack of integration and assimilation to German society and as an obstacle for their integration and assimilation. There is a clear contradiction that emerges in these discourses: on the one hand, migrants' cultural difference makes them unfit to become members of the national community, but, on the other hand, they are expected to assimilate to its prevailing norms and culture.

Discourses about immigrant assimilation and integration (and lack thereof) are closely tied to particular ideals of the nation and citizenship: a national community with a common culture and undivided identification with and political loyalty to a single nation-state (Kymlicka 1995; Miller, 2000). Defenders of these ideals see contemporary migrant transnationalism and the enhanced possibilities of dual and multiple citizenship as undermining the future of the nation and citizenship. They argue that the multiple allegiances or attachments associated with multiple citizenships cause loyalty conflicts, which hinder the development of identification with the host polity (Renshon, 2001).

These public and political debates display a strong host-society bias. They are deeply vested in the interests of the host polity—in national security, the maintenance of national cultures, and expectations for the integration and assimilation of immigrants, paying little attention to migrants' experiences and struggles. Recent research has called into question claims advanced in public and political debates (Foner, 2001), and has exposed and remedied their host-society bias. Scholars have developed new concepts and terms, such as migrant transnationalism and postnational citizenship, and have refocused the analytical lens on migrants: their security, practices, cultural

identities, needs, experiences, and desires, as well as the differences and the diversity among them (for example, Dwyer, 2000; Glick Schiller et al 1992; 1995; Ley and Kobayashi, 2005; Mahler and Pessar, 2001; Nagel and Staeheli, 2004; Pratt, 2004; Silvey, 2004; Smith and Guarnizo, 1998; Soysal, 1994; Yeoh and Huang, 2000). Papers in this theme issue draw on and critically engage with this body of literature. They reinforce scholarly critiques of public and political discourses, but also raise questions about arguments advanced by some scholars of migrant transnationalism. For example, papers in this issue challenge claims about the denationalization and deterritorialization of citizenship in the contemporary period.

The concept of transnationalism, which has become particularly popular since the early 1990s, suggests that immigrants forge and sustain familial, economic, cultural, and political ties and identities across national borders, in both home and host societies. The result is a "new type of migrant experience" (Glick Schiller et al, 1992, pages 8–9) and a new type of immigrant who no longer breaks ties with the home country, and who neither stays in place nor simply assimilates to the host society (Glick Schiller et al, 1995). Numerous empirical case studies have documented that contemporary migrants participate simultaneously in different spheres of life in the areas of both origin and destination at multiple geographic scales, and that they identify with and are able to hold multiple allegiances—to territories, ethnic, religious communities, and families across national borders (Ehrkamp, 2005; Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003; Leitner and Ehrkamp, this issue; Nagel and Staeheli, 2004; Preston et al, this issue; Staeheli and Nagel, this issue). In short, contemporary migrants are embedded in, identify with, and participate in multiple communities, and are not just, nor even primarily, anchored in one national collectivity.

Some scholars have interpreted this as a deterritorialization of identities and allegiances that is rendering national identities increasingly unimportant (Appadurai, 1996). Contributions to this theme issue, however, confirm research by other scholars that suggests otherwise (Mitchell, 2004). They demonstrate that migrants' transnational practices and ties do not dissolve identifications with territorially defined national polities, but catalyze a reconfiguration of the geographies of political identities and attachments (Leitner and Ehrkamp, this issue; Preston et al, this issue; Staeheli and Nagel, this issue). For example, Turkish national identity and commitment to Turkey figure prominently in young Turkish men's decisions to serve in the Turkish military, even as they plan for a future in Germany (Leitner and Ehrkamp, this issue). Hong Kong migrants in Canada negotiate their participation in both Hong Kong and Canadian society and polity (Preston et al, this issue). Arab-Americans develop a sense of belonging and political identities that transcend place and nation, while at the same time remaining rooted in both (Staeheli and Nagel, this issue).

The contributions to this issue also demonstrate that this polyvalence of identities and identities need not simply weaken migrants' identification with, and commitment to, the place of settlement. Indeed, migrants assert their belonging and show their commitment to the host polity through civic participation and actions at multiple geographic scales. Turkish immigrants in Germany do this by confronting German discourses about ghettoization and self-segregation at both local and national scales (Ehrkamp, this issue). Cambodian refugees take pride in contributing to their local community center, and in their children's military service for the American nation (Leitner and Ehrkamp, this issue). Arab-Americans see their civic activism as displaying their commitment to American society and as strengthening their sense of belonging to the United States, even as they hold onto a pan-national Arab identity (Staeheli and Nagel, this issue). Hispanic immigrants use the multicultural celebration of the Canadian Hispanic Day Parade on the streets of suburban Toronto to contest

negative and stereotypical representations of immigrants in order to assert their place in Toronto's and Canada's multicultural polity (Veronis, this issue).

These examples demonstrate the need for an expanded conception of citizenship (Benhabib, 1999; Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003; Nagel and Staeheli, 2004; Secor, 2003; Soysal, 1994). According to these scholars, citizenship should be conceived no longer only as a legal status and bundle of rights and responsibilities conferred by the nation-state, but also as "a social practice that individuals engage in beyond the state, through organizations of civil society and civic actions" (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003 page 5; for examples, see Preston et al, this issue; Staeheli and Nagel, this issue; Veronis, this issue).

Migrant transnationalism and migrants' citizenship practices that engage multiple scales across national borders also challenge liberal conceptions of nationally bounded citizenship that ties individuals to only one nation-state. Yasemin Soysal (1994; 2000), for example, suggested that postnational forms of membership are emerging. She contends that immigrants' claims for rights within receiving societies as well as within their home country are increasingly located in 'universal' human-rights discourses, rather than simply framed as citizenship rights. She interprets this recasting of citizenship rights as universal human rights as a denationalization of citizenship (Soysal, 1994).

Notwithstanding the tendency among migrants to frame rights claims within discourses of universal human rights, contributions to this special issue echo and substantiate concerns raised by other scholars that claims about the emergence of postnational citizenship are premature (Bauböck, 1994; Bosniak, 2001; Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003; Koopmans and Statham, 1999; Russell, 2005). As Linda Bosniak (2001, page 242) has put it, "there are real limitations to the international human rights system, and individuals still face serious constraints in enforcing their rights." The nation-state thus continues to matter as a guarantor and enforcer of human rights, even as human rights are increasingly defined at the global scale. Migrants' narratives suggest that they continue to perceive the acquisition of formal citizenship of the state of residence as a prerequisite for achieving a much-desired security in both the place of settlement and abroad; for facilitating transnational practices such as visiting or returning to their home country; for allowing them to reunite with and extend this security to their loved ones; and, last but not least, as a prerequisite for equal access to social and political rights in the country of residence. Migrants thus value national citizenship, even though they are fully aware of the discrepancies between the promises of equity and fairness associated with liberal democratic citizenship and the reality in which even naturalized migrants experience discrimination (Leitner and Ehrkamp, this issue).

Migrants' transnational mobility and practices, their social and political identities, and their understandings and practices of citizenship are, of course, not homogeneous. The contributions to this theme issue are highly attentive to how diversity and differences among migrants, by gender, class, residency status, race, place, and family mediate migrants' transnational mobility, ties, and understandings and practices of citizenship—complicating arguments about migrant transnationalism, and challenging the homogenization of immigrants in public and political discourse.

Class differences and differences in residency status affect migrants' transnational mobility and practices, as well as their access to citizenship in the place of residence. Transnational professionals and entrepreneurs are able to move with relative ease across national borders, have the monetary resources to sustain their transnational practices, and are even able to purchase citizenship in more than one locale (Mitchell, 2004; Ong, 1999). In contrast, national borders remain a significant obstacle for the transnational mobility of poor, undocumented migrants and refugees, who have to struggle

and expand significant energy, with limited resources, to maintain transnational ties and multilocal lives across national borders (Al-Ali et al, 2001; Conradson and Latham, 2005; Leitner and Ehrkamp, this issue; Mahler and Pessar, 2001; Nolin, 2002; Pratt and Yeoh, 2003; Staeheli and Nagel, this issue; Yeoh and Huang, 2000)

Valerie Preston, Audrey Kobayashi, and Guida Man draw attention to the ways that transnational ties and practices of well-educated and well-off Hong Kong immigrants to Canada are gendered, and how gender mediates settlement experiences and migrants' opportunities and dispositions towards formal citizenship and civic participation in both the place of settlement and origin. Highlighting the frequently neglected intersection between gender and family in practices of citizenship, they argue that "participation as a citizen of a larger society cannot be understood independently from participation as a member of a family unit" (Preston et al, this issue, page 1637).

Our own analysis of contemporary migrants' imaginings and practices of citizenship in the United States and Germany underlines how differences in positionalities among immigrants, positionalities that intersect with one another in complex ways, produce varied dispositions toward acquiring citizenship in their place of residence as well as distinct citizenship practices. The intersection of gender and national identity, for example, led to conflicting decisions about naturalization: Mexican and Turkish women did not see a contradiction between their Mexican and Turkish identities and acquiring formal citizenship of the host polity, whereas their male compatriots were more reluctant to naturalize because they felt naturalization would betray their national identity.

Our brief introductory remarks cannot possibly summarize in sufficient nuance the detailed findings of the papers collected here. In the interest of brevity we have focused on their commonalties. A close read also reveals contradictions and ambiguities across the papers, however. These are manifestations of the complexity of the issues at hand: the diversity and differences among migrants, their experiences, and their immigration contexts. This complexity underlines the need for further research that carefully unpacks and analyzes differences among and within groups and across contexts. Attention to these complexities will encourage a more nuanced understanding and help to resist overly broad generalizations, and theorizations that rely on exaggerated abstractions.

A number of issues that emerge in the papers also suggest that the conceptual frameworks for studying immigration and citizenship need to be expanded and rethought. There is a need to explicitly incorporate race into theories of citizenship and transnationalism. These theories generally sidestep issues of race, even though recent research has shown that race is strategically employed in struggles over membership and belonging—in public and political debates and representations of immigration and migrant transnationalism (see Riano and Wastl-Walter, this issue). Racialization of migrants and othering on the part of the host society also affects migrants' political identities, and their commitment to the receiving societies (Leitner, 2004). More generally, there is a need to make the sociospatial relations and struggles between migrants and the receiving society integral to a conceptual analysis of migrant transnationalism, immigrant incorporation, and citizenship (see Ehrkamp, this issue). Finally, further research is still needed on the migrant in order to intervene into abstract theoretical debates on how immigration is changing citizenship in the contemporary period of globalization and transnationalism. How do migrants themselves conceive of citizenship and create new spaces of citizenship, both materially and symbolically, as they negotiate their lives across borders and geographic scales?

We hope that these papers contribute to academic and public conversations aimed at rethinking the ways that immigration and citizenship are conceived and studied:

ways that refocus attention on the migrant, and on migrant – host-society relations that are not assimilatory but dialectical; and ways that conceive of citizenship as a social practice, and of formal citizenship as more inclusive and flexible—making room for multiple spaces of belonging.

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