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Transnational Diasporic Citizenship

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The study of the Haitian diaspora in the United States opens up public policy issues pertaining to different forms of citizenship practices experienced by the immigrants.<sup>1</sup> Transnational citizenship, because it is appropriated by the immigrants, has policy implications for both the sending and the receiving state. Although immigrants have always had relations with their homelands in one form or another, it seems as if these have taken on new meanings that impinge on the cohesion of the nation-state. The Haitian American case, because it displays structural features found in other diasporas, leads us to ponder the practice of different types of citizenship in the United States. This issue of citizenship forms is not new, and the experience of today's immigrants allows us an opportunity to recast it in light of the recognition of the nation's multicultural diversity.

Since World War II we have witnessed an increasing globalization of the world on a scale never seen before, and of a different nature. From the fifteenth century on, with the expansion of Europe through the establishment of colonies, there were voluntary and forced mass migrations from Europe and

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<sup>1</sup> Keynote address delivered at the annual meeting of the Sociology of Education Association, Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, February 1995. This paper was also read at a faculty symposium sponsored by the Sociology Department, University of California at Berkeley and in the Program in American Cultures at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Spring 1996. I am grateful to Raka Ray, George J. Sanchez, and Amy Einsohn for their thoughtful comments.

Africa to the new world. But this transcontinental process was not transnational, since more often than not it occurred within the so-called territory of the empire. Colonists and slaves were operating within the circuit established by the metropolitan country of which they were subjects.

Transnationality became a fact of life with the birth of the nation-state and through international migration. Thus, nineteenth-century European emigration to the United States was not always a one-way process: some immigrants were as much involved in building their new lives as they were in maintaining longstanding relations with the homeland and sometimes returning to their birthplace. The infrastructural transport and communication systems that supported these migrations were not as fast, efficient, or sophisticated as those we have today with the high-tech revolution, but nevertheless they were serviceable.

Several features characterize the current experience of immigrants in the United States: (1) those processes linking the diaspora to the homeland are transnational in that they move beyond the boundaries of the nation-state; (2) individual migrants hold membership in more than one country and continue to be active in homeland affairs; (3) the "politics of simultaneity," in which citizens participate in the affairs of two or more countries at the same time, replaces the "politics of succession" prevalent in the dual citizenship context; (4) these individuals claim or appropriate civil, political, social, and cultural rights in both countries; and (5) they develop bi-polar or multiple identities that reflect the bordercrossing process they experience in their everyday life. This new form of transnationalism is made possible by a constant flow of border-crossing people through international migration, with the availability of cheap and fast air travel, information technology (telephone, fax, e-mail, radio and video cassettes) and transnational financial circuits, including

money wiring and fast-courier operations; all these sustain the diaspora-homeland web of relationships.<sup>2</sup>

The nation-state that has until now constituted the niche where citizenship was defined, contextualized, and played out, has seen its boundaries open wide, and has become increasingly impotent in the presence of a series of transnational practices undertaken by its resident population; the fact that the state has no control over these practices further undermines its autonomy. The natural site for the expression of citizenship is no longer the exclusive domain of the city-state or nation-state where it was formerly confined and studied by political scientists and legal scholars; now it must also include extra-territorial--sometimes overseas--diasporic communities whose members have no plan to relinquish their ability to participate in their homeland affairs. Given the fact that these transnational practices occur on an everyday basis, it seems that our concept of citizenship is no longer consistent with the domain of practice. The moment seems appropriate to conceptualize the issue of transnational diasporic citizenship and the way it is practiced more actively and by a larger group of immigrants in the United States.

My goal in this essay is to reproblematicize the notion of citizenship so as to stretch it beyond the realm of the territorialized nation-state. In this effort, I want to show first how transnational practices have forged a new kind of citizen, the transnational diasporic citizen, and to imagine some of the ramifications and consequences of this modus vivendi for the citizen-subject and the state. Analyzing the rise and practice of this form of citizenship is important in several respects: it will help clarify not only questions

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<sup>2</sup> Linda Basch et al., Nations Unbound. New York: Gordon and Breach, 1994 and Nina Glick Schiller et al., Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration. New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1992.

underlying our search for equality for immigrant men and women and ethnic minority individuals and communities, but also the foundational principles that may explain the complexity and structuring of multicultural societies, and the bifocal or multifocal postures of immigrant communities in the United States.

#### From City-State to Nation-State

Transnational diasporic citizenship is the outgrowth of a number of forms of citizenship experienced in the West since the rise of the city-state. Indeed, in ancient Greece the city was the locale that gave birth to the notion and practice of citizenship.<sup>3</sup> The citizen was by definition an urban resident. However, residence in the city was not the only criterion for the exercise of citizenship; slaves, though residents, were excluded from the rights enjoyed by citizens.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the city-state could not be conceived of without the presence of its active citizens. It is that dialectical relation between the two that sheds light on the meaning of citizenship in ancient Greece.

Citizenship was an embodied practice, a lived experience as expressed in the "social contract" between the competent individual and the city-state. The institution came about as a way of formalizing the relations and obligations of the city vis-a-vis its residents, and vice-versa. It was seen by the hegemonic segment of the urban population as a central factor in the orderly organization of the city-state.

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<sup>3</sup> Bryan S. Turner, Citizenship and Capitalism. London: Allen and Unwin, 1986; H. Mark Roelofs, The Tension of Citizenship. New York: Rinehart & Company, 1957; and M. I. Finley, Economy and Society in Ancient Greece New York: Viking, 1982.

<sup>4</sup>Raphael Sealey, Women and Law in Classical Greece. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

In his treatise on politics, Aristotle provides a thoughtful definition of citizenship within the context of the city-state:

As a city is a collective body, and, like other wholes, composed of many parts, it is evident our first inquiry must be, what a citizen is : for a city is a number of citizens... in general, a citizen is one who both shares in the government and also in his turn submits to be governed; their condition, it is true, is different in different states: the best is that in which a man is enabled to choose and to persevere in a course of virtue during his whole life, both in his public and private state."<sup>5</sup>

Aristotle's definition of citizenship is a very restrictive one in terms of space (the city-state), eligibility (sojourners and slaves were excluded), and rights: youngsters and senior residents were not considered to be sufficiently competent to be "complete citizens" and therefore came under a different status category. Bodin argued that Aristotle's insistence on eligibility for public office as part of his definition of citizenship was a grave error, and proposed that this kind of restriction should be eliminated so as to make the state more inclusive.<sup>6</sup>

However, despite Bodin's reservations, Aristotle's definition of citizenship identifies central elements: namely, the relations between the subject and the city-state, the temporality of citizenship, the possibility of acquiring it or losing it because of one's action or inaction, the relativization of the content of citizenship, the centrality of the subject, the obligation of the state to provide an environment so that virtue can be practiced, the obligation of the subject

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<sup>5</sup>Aristotle, The Politics of Aristotle. London: Dent, 1912, p. 92.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Bodin, Six Books of the Commonwealth. Oxford: Blackwell, 1955, p.20.



vis-a-vis the city-state, and the recognition of the distinction between the public realm (participation in the public life of the city) and the private realm (the practice of virtue).

To the idea and experience of citizenship the practice of dual citizenship was added before the Renaissance. It is Riesenberg's view that by the fourteenth century multiple citizenship was already seen as a fact of life by legist-administrators in medieval states.<sup>7</sup> What was at stake was the ability of an individual to hold citizenship in his father's and his mother's town if they happened to live in different localities, and also for a merchant to be able to hold citizenship in his place of birth as well as in the town where he carried out his business practices.

At this early time, dual citizenship was regarded not as a theoretical possibility, but as a practical reality. There were good reasons for a town not to revoke the status of a citizen who had moved to another town. A man was made a citizen not only by the power of the state, but also by his will to comply with state requirements and responsibilities. Since citizenship could also be acquired by one's financial contribution to the city-state, Riesenberg discusses the "demoralization of the medieval city" and the "materialization of citizenship."

The territorial boundaries of the state (the bounded space of the city) that we find in Aristotle's definition of citizenship were sociologically and spatially expanded in the modern era to encompass the nation-state. The definition of citizenship is now tied to the existence of a much larger geographical entity--the nation-state--and is more inclusive in that one may become a citizen by birth or by naturalization and the status does not rest on one's ability to

<sup>7</sup> Peter Riesenberg, Citizenship in the Western Tradition. Chapel Hill:

University of North Carolina Press, 1922, p.183.

participate in public life. However, both definitions are geographically bound. The US Constitution exemplifies the modern trend, as it refers to the citizens of the United States, but it is also a backward document because of the exclusionary practices it legislates.<sup>8</sup> From the beginning, it divided the nation into the included insiders and the excluded outsiders, thereby planting the seeds for generations of conflict and social inequality in American life. The excluded others become the mirror in which the identity of dominance is constructed, and the included insiders are the mirror in which the subaltern contemplates and rejects his or her minoritized identity.

It is not my intention to smooth out the notion of citizenship so as to make it non-problematical. Throughout the world, a diverse body of practices are associated with this status. Some countries, like France and Germany, emphasize different criteria (ius soli or ius sanguinis) than does the US in the production of the citizen-subject.<sup>9</sup> These traditions are shaped by a country's vision of the national question and the direction of its societal project.

Modern citizenship is not the result of a peaceful evolution of society; it emerged out of a history of struggle and social conflict. In other words, modern citizenship is the outcome of cyclical societal conflicts, manifested through various social movements. It was produced as a way of solving inequality, preventing tension, and maintaining order and harmony in society.

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<sup>8</sup> Judith Shklar, American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991. James H. Kettner, The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978.

<sup>9</sup> Dominique Schnapper, La France de l'Intégration. Paris: Gallimard, 1991.

It is obvious that the meaning of citizenship has been constructed differently by different people in the same or diverse societal and historical periods. This ambiguity stems from the diverse experiences of the democratic systems in the West. There are "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches to citizenship, which may be seen from the perspective of the legal framework of the state, the interpretive framework of the citizen-subject, or that of "interpretive communities" espousing different legalist or exegetical traditions.

Alejandro briefly summarizes for us the views of major European philosophers: "They see the citizen as a legal construction aimed at order (Montesquieu); as a productive member who also obeys the law (Kant); as an active participant in a constant search of communality (Rousseau); as a divided self caught between isolation and shared goals (Tocqueville); or else a self divided between abstract freedom and concrete oppression (Marx)."<sup>10</sup> What is striking in these definitions of citizenship is the aspect each selects to stress or emphasize. Each presents an angular view that must be placed in the context of a larger constellation of other criteria.

In more recent times, sociologists and political scientists have established different models of citizenship. It is understandable that our notion of citizenship is shaped by our theory of the state, what we understand it to be, and the principles we want it to uphold. Alejandro again provides a concise summary of these interpretive models: "Citizenship as universality and as a legal construction (Ralph Darhendorf, Peter H. Schuck, and Rogers M. Smith); citizenship as neutrality (John Rawls); citizenship as communality and participation (Benjamin Barber, Michael Walzer); citizenship as the

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<sup>10</sup> Roberto Alejandro, Hermeneutics, Citizenship and the Public Sphere.

amelioration of class conflicts (T.H. Marshall); and citizenship as self-sufficiency (Lawrence Mead, Robert Fullinwider)."<sup>11</sup> As this brief review suggests, citizenship means different things to different people. This is why the view of the citizen-subject, long absent from this debate, needs to be introduced and given consideration.

In this postmodern era that gives meaning priority over structure, Alejandro leans toward "a hermeneutic construction of the citizen." He notes that "it is possible to see citizenship as a hermeneutic problem; namely, as an interpretive dialogue with traditions, laws, and institutions, as well as a compound of different discourses that are open to different meanings."<sup>12</sup> Given the multiculturalism of American society, this hermeneutic approach is important because meaning may be construed differently by different ethnic subcultures. In addition, the hermeneutic approach exposes the tension between citizenship and multiculturalism in the production of a negotiated social system in the new context of transnational practices.

#### Citizenship and Temporality

The factor of time is a contributing element in our deconstruction of the meaning of citizenship in Western social and political practice. Citizenship is a temporal entity, one that may be fractured by time.

In his discourse on politics, Aristotle distinguished between complete and incomplete citizens. The complete citizen was the man who could hold public office, obey the law, and accomplish his civic duties. In contrast, the incomplete citizen was the youngster or the aged person who was ineligible for public office. However, he saw the youngster as being in the process of developing with age into a complete citizen. For Aristotle, then, citizenship

<sup>11</sup>Alejandro, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>12</sup>Alejandro, op. cit., p. 14.

was not a fixed status but one that could be attained through age and lost through age as well.

Kant's distinction between active and passive citizen shows also the temporality of the exercise or practice of citizenship.

But under the constitution, not everyone is equally qualified to have voting rights, that is, to be a citizen rather than as passive subjects under its protection... As passive parts of the State, it does not follow that they ought themselves to have the right to deal with the State as active members of it, to reorganize it, or take action by way of introducing laws...and it must therefore be made possible for them to raise themselves from this passive condition in the State, to the condition of active citizenship.<sup>13</sup>

Here Kant shows the possibility for the evolution of one's status, which is dependent on both the subject's willingness to change his status and the state's ability to set the conditions conducive to that change. Here we see individuals participating at different levels in the affairs of the state.

The distinction between the good and the bad citizen was common during the French Revolution. As Retat notes in his analysis of the proliferation of the use of the word citizenship in the newspapers of the era, "the principal division...is that which opposes the 'good', 'honest', 'peaceful', 'zealous', and 'true' citizens to the 'bad', the 'false', the 'enemies of public welfare' (or

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<sup>13</sup> Immanuel Kant, The Philosophy of Law. Edinburgh: T. and H. Clark, 1887.

'disturbers of public peace'), the 'factious'".<sup>14</sup> This distinction continues to have common currency, whether the concern is ethical, political, or social, and thus addresses the potential disharmony that may creep into one's practice of any one aspect of citizenship.

Temporality is implicit here because there can be a time lag between the good and the bad, and more specifically the bad citizen may eventually become a good citizen, and vice versa. The criteria used for this judgment depend on the state or the individual interpreter.

Temporality is also factored in the deployment of dual citizenship. This status category implies that citizenship can be detached from a specific location or that it does not have to coincide with the place of residence. Its spatiality is the base of its temporality. It is indeed the politics of succession: using one's citizenship status in one country (birthplace) at one time and then claiming another citizenship status at another time in another country (residence). It implies sequencing and not simultaneity of use.

Perhaps the most useful frame for our analysis is the one provided by T.H. Marshall.<sup>15</sup> Marshall deconstructs citizenship in terms of its civil, social, and political components, relating them to different historical periods and to different agencies of the state: civil citizenship in the seventeenth century (the courts), political citizenship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

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<sup>14</sup> Pierre Retat, *The Evolution of The Citizen From the Ancient Regime to the Revolution*. In *The French Revolution and the Meaning of Citizenship*, edited by Renee Waldinger et al. Westport: Greenwood Press, pp.7, 1993.

<sup>15</sup> T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950.

(the Parliament) and social citizenship in the twentieth century (welfare institutions).

This distinction is important in that it implies the ability of an individual to exert one form of citizenship without the others, for example, civil citizenship without political or social citizenship. One of Marshall's valuable insights is that the state may prevent an immigrant from accessing political citizenship, but it may not be able to stop him or her from enjoying civil citizenship.

American citizenship adds a temporal factor to this status that reflects the way in which citizenship is acquired and is meant to be exercised. Being a citizen by birth or naturalization temporalizes the practice once more in the sense that there is not complete equality of legal status among immigrants and non-immigrant American citizens. For example, a naturalized citizen cannot become the president of the United States. In this important aspect of public American life, all naturalized citizens are discriminated against.

Modern citizenship has its own components and each has its own genealogy. Because these components did not originate at the same time, there is a historical disarticulation among their genealogies. The distinctions made by Marshall are central to our effort to deconstruct and explain the practice of transnational citizenship which characterizes the modus operandi of a vast segment of the new immigrant population in the United States.

#### Conditions of Transnationalism

Transnational citizenship is facilitated by a series of global processes in the areas of politics, economic restructuring, information technology, and transnational migration; of cultural flows to which the nation-state is a participant; and of transnational practices of immigrant communities. These global transformations and the crisis of the nation-state provide the

international context in which these practices take place and transnational citizenship takes hold.

The nation-state is less and less the enclosed unit it was seen to be during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Several factors that came about after World War II have intensified the interactive process between states. Factors related to the behavior of world capitalism and the hegemonic practices of metropolitan centers have been proposed as largely responsible for the changes in the globalization process.

This new state of affairs has been explained in terms of "post-fordism,"<sup>16</sup> "flexible accumulation,"<sup>17</sup> "postmodernism,"<sup>18</sup> or "late capitalism."<sup>19</sup> But the phenomenon does not have a single cause and it cannot be explained by a single theory or methodological approach. Transnationalism is a central process through which globalization takes hold and the global web of a multiple-layered network of sites of interactive relations is maintained.

The conditions of transnationalism have been discussed in different modes, depending on whether the accent is placed on the international movement of people, goods, capital, information, or all four of them together. Appadurai discusses global cultural flows, which he divides into "ethnoscapes," referring to the constant movement of legal and undocumented immigrants and visitors

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<sup>16</sup> E. Sayer, Post-Fordism in Question. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 1989.

<sup>17</sup> David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989; Edward W. Soja, Postmodern Geographies. London: Verso, 1989..

<sup>18</sup> J. F. Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986.

<sup>19</sup> F. Jameson, Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Capitalism. New Left Review 146: 53-92, 1984.



across state boundaries; "technoscapes," accentuating the role of technology in the globalization process;" finanscapes," emphasizing the hidden space that transcends national boundaries through which global capital circulates; "mediascapes," pinpointing the rapidity with which images of localities and events are projected and made available to people all over the world; and "ideoscapes," stressing the importance of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ideologies in the maintenance or the undermining of state power.<sup>20</sup>

In Castles' view, global market forces have affected the restructuring of the world's population in several ways. He sees globalization as reflected in people's movements, whether generated by decolonization, push and pull factors, transnational corporations, or religious or political persecution. Information technology plays a central role in the global economy, producing new types of social relations and creating a space through which the transnational practices can flow.<sup>21</sup>

All these factors have contributed to the creation of a new transnational moment that Tololyan describes as "massive and instantaneous movements of capital; the introduction of previously 'alien' cultures through the practice of 'media imperialism', issues of the double allegiance of populations and the plural affiliations of transnational corporations."<sup>22</sup> Having identified some of the objective conditions that have made the practice of this new form of

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<sup>20</sup> Arjun Appadurai, Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy. In Global Culture edited by Mike Featherstone. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1990, pp. 296-99.

<sup>21</sup> Stephens Castles, Italians in Australia: Building a Multicultural Society on the Pacific Rim. Diaspora 1(1):45-66, 1991.

<sup>22</sup> Kachig Toloyan, The Nation-State and its others. Diaspora 1(1):5, 1991.

transnationalism possible, I shall now provide some illustrations of how the process operates.

### Practices of Transnationalism

In an early formulation, Nye and Keohane, who edited a special issue of International Organization entitled Transnational Relations and World Politics (1971), define transnational interactions as "the movement of tangible or intangible items across state boundaries when at least one actor is not an agent of a government or an intergovernmental organization."<sup>23</sup> More recently transnationalism has been defined as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement."<sup>24</sup> By and large, as Verdery notes, transnationalism tends to refer to "processes taking place across state boundaries" and points to "changes in the permeability of state borders and in the capacity or desire of state organizations to fix persons, capital, and objects onto the territory they manage." She identifies two different types of transnationalism, taking into consideration the identity of the entities involved. According to her distinction, transnationalism has two different meanings: "something spilling across sovereign polities," which she refers to as "tran-statal," and "something spilling across ethnic communities" which she refers to as "trans-ethnonational."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph S. Nye and Robert O. Keohane, Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction. In Transnational Relations and World Politics, edited by Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. xii, 1972.

<sup>24</sup>Linda Basch et al, op. cit. p 7.

<sup>25</sup>Verdery, 1994, p.2.

Transnational practices have been with us now for several years, precisely because world conditions allow them to happen. As these practices continue, the state has no means available to control their content, direction, or shape. As a consequence, the territorial boundaries of the state are unable to enclose all the daily practices of the citizenry.<sup>26</sup> Let us look at some illustrations of this new type of transnational citizen.

Since the collapse of the Duvalier administration in 1986, the Haitian political field has become openly transnational, with active players living in Montreal, New York, Paris, and elsewhere. Haitian political activities occur conjointly in these cities and in Port-au-Prince with a constant back-and-forth discussion of ideas and strategies among the players at different sites inside and outside of Haiti. Although many of these overseas Haitian political activists make several visits to Port-au-Prince, and Port-au-Prince players travel outside Haiti to meet their overseas colleagues, it is rather by telephone, fax, and transnational courier firms (some of these operated by members of the Haitian diaspora) that these contacts are maintained and consolidated.

The transnational political players have financed the electoral campaigns of their favorite politicians, engaged in fundraising overseas for their presidential candidates, prepared publicity and ads, written political speeches, and provided electoral strategies. Satellite political organizations whose headquarters are located in Port-au-Prince have been established in Miami, Boston, New York, Montreal, and Paris. In a sense the political field is played out in more than one country and is by its very nature transnational.<sup>27</sup> The political operators have established a transnational political field through which their national political activities take shape, and this makes any attempt

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<sup>26</sup>Basch et al 1994

<sup>27</sup>Glick Schiller et al., 1992.

to distinguish between local and overseas politics in relation to the Haitian political system less and less meaningful.

Grassroots or popular organizations in Haiti have gone further than just contacting Haitian-American political organizations. Their leaders are also in contact with American grassroots organizations, who sometimes provide funds or strategic advice, and connect them with potential sister organizations inside Haiti. Sometimes they raise enough support abroad, using the diasporic grassroots groups as their engine, to mobilize the American government and public opinion in support of their aim of installing democracy in Haiti.

The transnationalization of grassroots politics has also been noted elsewhere; for example, Smith has shown how Latin American grassroots groups have linked up with American grassroots groups to create a vast movement of bottom-up democracy throughout the Americas.<sup>28</sup>

These transnational practices are not peculiar to the American hemisphere; they have become a worldwide phenomenon. Appadurai offers an example of how these transnational practices are sometimes brokered by a third party: "While India exports waiters and chauffeurs to Dubai and Sharjah, it also exports software engineers to the United States (indentured briefly to the...World Bank), [they are] then laundered through the State Department to become wealthy 'resident aliens', who are in turn objects of seductive messages to invest their money and know-how in federal and state projects in India."<sup>29</sup> Subsequently, these citizens maintain ongoing relations with India and thereby participate in the affairs of two distinct nation-states while enjoying citizenship rights of both.

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<sup>28</sup>Michael Peter Smith, *Transnational Migration and the Globalization of Grassroots Politics*. *Social Text* 39: 15-34, 1994.

<sup>29</sup> Appadurai, *op. cit.*, p.298.

Across the US-Mexico border, according to Rouse, an immigrant community in California and a community in Mexico function in some ways as a single community: "Through the continuous circulation of people, money, goods, and information, the various settlements have become so closely woven together that, in an important sense, they have come to constitute a single community spread across a variety of sites, something I refer to as a 'transnational migrant circuit.'"<sup>30</sup>

Transnational practices have been studied most specifically in the case of diasporic individuals and communities, and refer to the ability of immigrants to influence and participate in the political, social, and civil processes in both the sending and the receiving countries. Such practices are facilitated by the remittances they send and by the availability of telecommunications. This form of overseas participation in the affairs of one state while one resides in another is labeled variously as "absentee patriotism" and "long-distance nationalism," terms that emphasize the need to distinguish the concept of locality from that of space and political practice.<sup>31</sup> The fax machine, telephone, e-mail, audio and video cassettes are among the means used to activate the process.

#### The Body of the Transnational Citizen

Transnationality brings a new dimension in the conception of the body of the citizen. Traditionally, that body has been seen as shaped, controlled, and disciplined by a state and these state actions are part of the process of

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<sup>30</sup> Roger Rouse, Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernism. Diaspora 1(1): 14, 1991.

<sup>31</sup> Jan Nederveen Pieterse, Globalisation as Hybridisation. International Sociology 9(2): 165, 1994; B. Anderson, The New World Order. New Left Review 190: 3-14, 1992.

transforming one into a full-fledged citizen. It is understood that the state in order to make the polity work for everyone has some rights over a citizen's body, and that national policies seek the common good rather than the happiness of specific individuals. In the case of transnational citizenship, the questions are: What kind of control can the state exert over the transnational citizen's body? Which state is responsible for the well-being of the individual citizen? And to which state must this citizen pledge loyal allegiance?

Michel Foucault developed an apparatus to analyze the body in the context of the nation-state.<sup>32</sup> Today one must ask whether one state has central control over the body of the transnational citizen, and another state has peripheral control or whether both states have peripheral control. Does the body enjoy more freedom in one scenario than in another? What legal rights does the state have over a non-resident in the practice of civil and social citizenship and what legal rights can a non-resident claim vis-a-vis the state? This question becomes more complicated still if one accepts Turner's view that "rapid developments in the technical competence of modern medicine have raised ethical questions around the ownership of the human body."<sup>33</sup>

Citizenship implies a sense of belonging. Hence transnational citizenship implies belonging to at least two states. One can see that the intensity of one's relations to both states may not be equal. Indeed, there may be variations in the density of these relations.

It is the politics of simultaneity that is the fundamental characteristic of transnational citizenship. But when the body is in question, the notion of temporality must be addressed, as well as that of intentionality. The citizen

<sup>32</sup> Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory*. London: Sage, 1993.

<sup>33</sup>Bryan S. Turner, *Citizenship and Social Theory*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1993,p 2.

may prepare himself or herself to participate actively at a later date in the affairs of another state. This participation in the political life of another state may be permanent or cyclical. In the latter case, the politics of simultaneity is temporarily replaced by the politics of postponement. This is the situation of immigrant students who intend to engage in transnationality after completing their education abroad. Thus age may also be a reason for the postponement of one's engagement in transnational practices.

Transnational citizenship is one aspect of the complex problem of the politics of the body that is seminal in Foucault's work. It provides an alternative way of seeing how the productive work of a citizen can be beneficial to two different states. The investment of the state in the body of a citizen in terms of free compulsory education was seen as lost to that state if the person chose to reside elsewhere. Transnational citizenship solves this dilemma because it becomes one way of repaying the investment made in one's body by the state.

In regard to the ownership of the body and the attempt of the nation-state to discipline and control it, transnational citizenship can be seen as a form of emancipation from the constraints of one nation-state and the expression of an expanded freedom by the transnational citizen-subject.

### Transnational Citizenship

The use of the concept of transnational citizenship is an attempt to express and analyze a set of practices by recent immigrants in the United States. However, transnational citizenship is not the exclusive domain of these groups of people, since it is experienced by others as well. The declining autonomy of the modern nation-state as globalization proceeds challenges us to revisit the question of the nature of citizenship. As Turner notes, "in a world which is increasingly more global, citizenship will have to develop to embrace both the

globalization of social relations and the increasing social differentiation of social systems. The future of citizenship must therefore be extracted from its location in the nation-state."<sup>34</sup> The challenge is to reproblematicize citizenship so that the transnational (or perhaps global) content becomes an integral element of its constitution<sup>35</sup>.

By transnational diasporic citizenship, I mean a set of practices that a person is engaged in, and a set of rights acquired or appropriated, that cross nation-state boundaries and that indicate membership in at least two nation-states. This definition decenters the previous juridico-political definition of citizenship and invokes the centrality of its social, civil, and political components. It also implies that physical residence is not a requirement or a guarantee to fulfill some of these components of citizenship. This practice, we must note, is not yet legally recognized by the nation-states involved. As happens in other aspects of citizenship, the practice precedes the legal recognition of it.

Marshall locates his discussion of citizenship inside the nation-state and presupposes a stable, somewhat homogeneous system in which inequalities of social classes are studied in terms of the impact of citizenship in alleviating the burden of the poor. The strength of his approach is in the deconstruction of citizenship in terms of its civil, political, and social properties. By insinuating that one can exist without the others and by implying that these

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<sup>34</sup>Turner, op. cit. 1993, p. 15.

<sup>35</sup>Rainer Baubock, Transnational Citizenship: Membership and Rights in International Migration. Brookfield, Vermont: Edward Elgar Publishing Company, 1994. He notes that "in the increasingly mobile societies of modernity, citizenship must be transnationalized in order to retain its significance as equal membership in territorial polities" p. 331.



properties have different temporalities based on different historical origins, this aspect of Marshall's work is most useful to understanding the internal articulations of the elements of transnational citizenship.

Transnational citizens may participate actively in the social, political, and civil life of their country of birth as well as in their country of residence, depending on obstacles or opportunities created by physical distance. Their involvement in the affairs of both states may not have equal strength, or may focus on the practice of different aspects of citizenship. Here space is important, as it refers to social, physical, structural, and ideological distance. For example, physical distance is not a measure of social distance, for Jamaicans living in Brooklyn may be closer to Jamaicans in Kingston than to their white neighbors in Brooklyn, and the relations that these Jamaicans maintain with their compatriots on the island may be as intense or more so than their ongoing relations with their neighbors in their country of residence.

A distinction should be made between the urban, regional, or national content of transnational citizenship. These are not mutually exclusive categories. Some transnational citizens are more interested in the local urban community they come from than in the national state. In contrast, others identify with the nation and less so with the local community. Thus, transnational citizenship may have an urban, regional, or national bias.

The notion of transnational citizenship necessarily implies that (1) not all citizens are transnational, (2) transnational citizenship is experienced only by some members of society, and (3) transnational citizens are a heterogeneous group (first-generation immigrants, retirees, returnees, spouses of citizens, and employees of international organizations).

The content of citizenship is expanding, as it has been since its institutionalization as a set of practices, and there is no reason to believe that the notion of citizenship in its modern version is in its last phase of evolution. Turner has identified four phases in the development of citizenship: "The first had the consequence of removing property from the definition of the citizen; the second removed sex; the third wave redefined the significance of age and kinship ties in the family for citizenship rights; and a fourth wave... is currently expanding citizenship by ascribing rights to nature and the environment."<sup>36</sup> Barbelet criticizes Turner for failing to factor in the role of social movements as an intrinsic element in the evolution of citizenship.

I am arguing that we are now in another phase of the development of citizenship even though this has not yet been confirmed by the state. Transnational citizenship is a fact of life because of a number of phenomena that feed its existence and expansion: globalization, international migration, the weakening of the boundaries of the nation-state, and the reality of transnational practices of members of national societies.

The discussion of citizenship forces us to acknowledge the reality of minority citizenship because the transnational citizen may end up being a minoritized citizen in one nation-state. Minority citizenship is a contradiction in terms since citizenship implies equality of status, though not of conditions. However, in practice the minoritized citizen has always been a second-class citizen in that his or her theoretical rights cannot be enforced in everyday life or are enforced in a discriminatory fashion.

Modern citizenship has been central to the production of the minority in the United States in two ways: (1) citizenship excludes minorities at first and

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<sup>36</sup> J. M. Barbelet, Citizenship. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, p. 102, 1988; Turner, op. cit 97-98, 1986.

later places them in a marginal category (as with Native Americans); and (2) it incorporates them as second-class people within the nation-state (as with African-Americans). Transnational citizenship provides a way of escaping complete minoritization since the link with the homeland allows one to enjoy the majority status one cannot exercise in the adopted country.

Politically, transnational citizenship is still structurally minoritized by such restrictions as the prohibition against non-natives serving as president. It fares better in the civil and social arenas, where many barriers have been lifted, at least theoretically--though not always in practice, especially in the case of immigrants of color.

Transnational citizenship is expressed positively in a milieu where cultural diversity is recognized. It is both a recognition of this diversity and a contestation of a narrow view of citizenship. Ethnicity becomes then an important factor in the expression and manifestation of citizenship. This is why cultural citizenship must be seen as a way of recognizing and legitimizing cultural practices of minorities through, for example, curricular reforms that take into consideration the reality of cultural diversity<sup>37</sup>. Cultural and transnational citizenship are important projects of the transnational citizen-subject.

It is not enough to focus on the legal framework of citizenship in terms of rights and duties as enforced by the state. This structural view is only one aspect of the practice. It is also important to look at it from the standpoint of the citizen-subject, that is the hermeneutic approach. An individual may live an ideal citizen life in different ways by participating in some aspects of citizenship more than in others. It is important to examine the subject's point

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<sup>37</sup> Talcott Parsons and Gerald M. Platt, The American University. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973.

of view because the expectations of the state and of the subject are not the same. By also focusing our attention on the citizen-subject, we may gain a better understanding of the practice of transnational citizenship.

Transnational citizenship has a number of ramifications that are beyond the reach of the nation-state and under the control of the citizen-subject. For example, while the state may furnish welfare to a needy citizen, the state cannot prevent the welfare recipient from sharing his money with parents abroad (who are citizens of another country).

People come to the US with different expectations, and with different experiences of citizenship at home. Thus in the American landscape, one may speak of a plurality of citizenship experiences. Transnational citizenship is an aspect or region of that plurality and is not homogeneous in terms of either temporality-- first generation and other generations, level of connectedness with the homeland--strong versus weak experiences specific to each ethnic group, or the means used to express one's transnational citizenship, such as telecommunications and travel.

We must consider the US as a society comprising diverse zones or regions of citizenship, where all the residents participate in the fundamental tenets of the US constitutional charter with its badge of rights, privileges, and duties. However, participation in American citizenship does not always prevent or restrict one from holding another citizenship. This is recognized by dual citizenship, which assumes that one's citizenship can be used in only one country at a time. This is a moot question in practice: we have seen American citizens with dual citizenship who, when they get in trouble abroad, invoke their American citizenship for immunity, claiming to be a foreign national.

Nor does citizenship encompass all the extra-territorial practices of citizens who want to engage in transnational practices. Furthermore, transnational

citizenship does not refer only to individuals who hold citizenship in more than one country, but also to resident aliens (undocumented persons) who are involved in transnational practices, although "many of them share some or all of the civil and social rights of citizens, their political rights in the host society tend to be limited or non-existent."<sup>38</sup> One may say that the US Constitution is the central legal discourse that connects all the citizenship regions: civil, social, cultural, and political citizenship, dual citizenship, and transnational citizenship.

Transnational citizenship is a region in the American citizenship landscape that comprises different groups of people: those who were born here and live in another country and those who are naturalized Americans and have ongoing relations with the homeland. The plurality of American citizenship is upheld when we recognize that is made up of these diverse forms of citizenship. Just as we recognize the US as a society with plural ethnic communities, we must also recognize the US as a society with plural citizenship types. Transnational diasporic citizenship is but one form of the American citizenship experience.

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<sup>38</sup>Barry Hindess, *Citizenship in the Modern West*. In Citizenship and Social Theory, edited by Bryan S. Turner. Beverly Hills: Sage, pp. 28, 1993.

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