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Andrew Gordon^a; Trevor Stack^a

^a University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland

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Citizenship Beyond the State: Thinking with Early Modern Citizenship in the Contemporary World

ANDREW GORDON & TREVOR STACK¹

University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland

ABSTRACT *In our introduction, we pose some of the broader questions raised by the interdisciplinary and inter-period work of our contributors, while also drawing upon our own research on early modern London and contemporary Mexico. We argue that elements of the early-modern tradition of urban citizenship have indeed survived alongside national citizenship, at least in certain contexts. Beyond that, we argue that early modern citizenship also helps to set in relief the scalar, emancipatory vision of nineteenth- and twentieth-century national-territorial projects; that it helps to think about keeping a distance from nation-states and transnational institutions while still partaking of them; that it draws our attention to the complexities of inclusion and exclusion in contemporary citizenship; and that it helps us think beyond the narrowly-defined “rights” of national citizenship to include the freedom that is entailed in the pursuit of livelihoods.*

This special issue explores the potential of early modern notions of citizenship to help us rethink the possibilities of contemporary citizenship. It is a collaborative project of specialists on different periods and regions and from different disciplines. This includes the editors and authors of this introduction: Gordon’s background is in the literary study of early modern England, while Stack comes to this project from the anthropological study of contemporary Mexico. In this introduction, rather than simply setting these diverse articles within the context of scholarly debates, we draw on them to conjure a vision for contemporary citizenship. In doing this, we regard citizenship as an open set of elements, found in different permutations and combinations across time and space, often including notions of equality, individuality, autonomy, freedom, rights, duties, belonging, the common or public good, public debate, representation, inclusion and exclusion, popular sovereignty, and commitment to some kind of community or polity. Citizenship, understood thus as a complex of elements, has also included various notions of government. We use the term State for one particular notion of government: States are governments that seek to appropriate and control citizenship, rather than simply playing a role in that citizenship. Scholars of citizenship have often followed suit by reducing citizenship wholly to a relationship with States. We argue, drawing on the articles, that early modern citizenship suggests ways for people to take citizenship back from States,

Correspondence Addresses: Andrew Gordon and Trevor Stack, School of Language and Literature, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen AB24 3UB, Scotland. E-mails: a.gordon@abdn.ac.uk and t.stack@abdn.ac.uk.

while still leaving a place for government.² More broadly, while two of our contributors, the historians Herzog and Ramos, focus on legal definitions of citizenship, the other contributors consider less formal manifestations of citizenship. Both the historian Sacks and the anthropologist Roitman look at the relation between the legal category and broader notions of freedom, including economic freedom, although in the very different contexts of early modern England and the contemporary Chad Basin. The political theorist Isin also regards citizenship as something that escapes the legal definitions of States, as well as States' attempts to map citizenship onto national territory.

Stack first became interested in citizenship while doing fieldwork in the 1990s in a group of towns in the Sierra de Tapalpa, west Mexico. He began with a topic seemingly far removed from citizenship: how people in west Mexico talked and wrote about the history of towns and cities. One of his findings was that townspeople talked about both the history of their town and the history of Mexico, but they did so in different ways and rarely connected the history of their towns with Mexican history. This was because their knowledge of their town's history was different *in kind* to their knowledge of Mexico's history. Townspeople sat through school classes and performed in exams, they marched in commemorative parades and some organised those parades, and they argued about the rights and wrongs of that history. By contrast, when townspeople talked or wrote about the history of towns, they focused much more exclusively on what was known of that history, both by themselves and by other people. Stack argues that this was reflected in their citizenship: they were citizens of their towns as well as citizens of Mexico, but their urban citizenship was different in kind to their national citizenship. As national citizens, townspeople argued about national politics and what it meant to be Mexican, while being put through their paces in the school classroom and in civic parades. Except for a few who had connections with politicians in state or federal government, national politics was not something that townspeople could really affect. As citizens of towns, by contrast, they could aspire to being part of a public arena in which their views might just count for something (Stack, 2003).

Stack realized subsequently that his findings in contemporary Mexico resonated in interesting ways with accounts of citizenship in early modern Europe. Hence the decision to join forces with Gordon in organising a conference on "Urban versus National Citizenship" at the University of Aberdeen in April 2005.³ Gordon's work had brought him to engage with the fabric of community and neighbourhood in early modern London. Despite the upheavals of the Reformation, his study of Londoners writing about London showed how closely they identified with the city, bearing out the position that early-modern citizenship was above all a citizenship of towns and cities, rather than nations. It is generally assumed that early modern urban citizenship was superseded in the modern period by national citizenship, but Stack and Gordon, struck by the parallels in their findings, wondered whether urban citizenship might have survived alongside national citizenship. The authors devised the conference to explore what had happened to early modern traditions of urban citizenship. In order to explore this as fully as possible, we brought together a group of scholars from social, intellectual and constitutional history, anthropology, political science and urban sociology, and asked them to speak from their specialist fields about the fate of those urban traditions.

Did early modern urban citizenship survive the emergence of national citizenship? Herzog suggests in her contribution that urban citizenship in Spain survived alongside national citizenship well into the nineteenth century, and perhaps into the twentieth.

She indicates, too, that the Spanish urban tradition, which included notions of citizenship, had been used as a template for colonisation in the Americas, and it is possible that urban citizenship survived the rise of national citizenship in Latin America as well. Significantly, the anthropologist Claudio Lomnitz, another contributor to our conference, has argued that:

Mexican political geography has recognised three to four main levels of political communities. Of these, the city, town, or village is the only political unit with an uninterrupted history of having matched government with the representation of a people and of a popular will. (Lomnitz-Adler, 1995, p. 25)

Lomnitz does not identify this “uninterrupted history” as a tradition of urban citizenship, but this might explain Stack’s observation in the Sierra de Tapalpa that townspeople were both citizens of towns and of the Mexican nation. Despite these possible continuities, the sociologist Guido Martinotti reminded the conference of the transformation of urban life worldwide, including the dramatic expansion of many cities (although not all cities have grown). Other speakers reflected on the expansion of governments, many of which command resources of which early modern rulers could only dream. The conference also bore witness to the diversity of early modern traditions of citizenship, and so to the legacy of those traditions. Sacks looked from early modern England towards citizenship experiments by early settlers in North America, Herzog assessed the consequences of Spanish American developments, and Ramos the traditions of local polities in Portugal and what became of them under Liberal reform. In her article, Roitman broadens the discussion still further, exploring the quite different genealogies of citizenship in the Chad Basin, where notions of freedom were marked by the legacies of Islamic conquest as well as of French colonialism.⁴

Yet the conference suggested that there was much more to learn from early modern citizenship. Beyond the question of historical continuities, we decided that early modern citizenship could help us to refocus our understanding of citizenship in general. To begin with, just as Stack found citizenship embedded in the knowledge of history, Gordon’s interest in urban citizenship arose from his study of the cultural practices through which inhabitants of early modern London represented and experienced their relationship to the city. Roitman notes, in a similar vein, that much scholarship of contemporary Africa has highlighted the “processes inherent to the cultural constitution of citizenship . . . rather than assuming the status of citizenship as a juridical form or a philosophical category” (p. 2). Gordon argued, specifically, that citizenship was ingrained in the rich culture of processions that animated early Tudor culture. Again, processions and parades were a prominent feature in contemporary west Mexico, although Stack found that they were dominated by State and Church agendas. In early modern London, by contrast, they provided a key vehicle through which the city dweller could articulate and enact a sense of belonging within multiple, overlapping identities. Citizenship was not singular but multiple. This resonates with the work of the anthropologist James Holston, who has brought the early modern experience to bear on his study of contemporary Brazilian cities, to argue for “multiple citizenships based on the local, regional and transnational affiliations that aggregate in contemporary urban experience” (Holston, 1999, p. 169). The study of processional culture also draws attention to the performative elements of citizenship. In early modern London membership of the trade community in the form

of the Livery Companies, participation in the City's organs of governance, and communion with Christ through belonging to both parish and the Diocese of London, were all expressed through ceremony. Such activities were not narrowly formal occasions, and their significance ought to be understood in relation to a wider field of practices, a continuum ranging from festive occasions to demonstrations of collective disorder. Early modern processional culture provided a symbolic vocabulary that could be appropriated or contested. Gordon has stressed the negotiations that went into ceremony, through which various social groups sought to find and make a place for themselves. A contemporary parallel can be found in the Gay Pride parades that have arisen in cities across the world. Plans for Moscow Pride were rejected in 2006 by the Mayor of Moscow, with Alexander Chuev, a leading Christian Democrat in the Duma, supporting this stance on the basis that "[a]ny human being . . . has a right to live the way they want with whoever they want, [but] the Parade concerns not private but *public* life" (Shoffman, 2006, emphasis added). No doubt the Pride parade intended precisely to project gays into public life, giving a literal recognition of place within society. This is the ostensible focus of the Queer Nation slogan: "Out of the closets, into the streets". The aim of Moscow Pride was, in other words, a broad assertion of visibility, what we might call an enactment of gay citizenship, rather than a simple demand for legal rights or recognition by the State.

The example of processional culture reinforces our central argument: that early modern citizenship suggests ways of rethinking citizenship by decoupling it from the State. T.H. Marshall argued that what he called "social" and "civil" (and "political") rights were closely integrated in medieval and early modern towns, but had become separated from each other by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In particular, "the social rights which had been rooted in membership of the village community, the town and the guild, were gradually dissolved by economic change" (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992, p. 9). For Marshall, the twentieth-century "educational system and the social services" helped to restore the connection of civil and social (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992, p. 9). In drawing this parallel between early modern and contemporary citizenship, Marshall made light of a major shift in citizenship since early modern times. It was no longer community but the State that administered this citizenship. As a result, citizenship had become a *ground for making claims on the State*, whether for social, civil or political rights. Marshall simply took for granted the State's central role in twentieth-century citizenship. In another influential definition of citizenship, the historical sociologist Charles Tilly (1999, p. 253) has written that: "citizenship designates a set of mutually enforceable claims relating categories to agents of government". Tilly's definition allows for the diversity of possible relationships, but he still makes government the focal point of citizenship, rather than seeing government as one of several issues *for* citizenship. By contrast, we want to argue, inspired by our own reading of early modern citizenship, that citizenship need *not* be reduced to a relationship with the State (or other agencies). In making this argument, we draw on a recent essay on citizenship by the anthropologist Aihwa Ong, who presents a portrait of citizenship for the twenty-first century, based on her own research in Southeast Asia as well as other studies, but we write in counterpoint to Ong's essay, because she *also* treats citizenship as a ground for making claims, albeit not just on the State (Ong, 2006). We argue that citizenship has, at certain times and in certain places, been much more than this.

In the first half of this introduction, we use early modern citizenship to set in relief the project of States to appropriate citizenship for themselves. Part of this project was the

attempt to roll out citizenship across national territory. We discuss the limits of that project. Citizenship has always eluded the pretensions of States, despite the increasingly sophisticated schemata that States impose upon citizenship. In the second half of the introduction, we use the study of early modern citizenship to rethink citizenship *beyond* a relationship with the State. Rather than thinking of citizenship simply as a ground for making claims on States, we argue that citizenship can be conceived more broadly as a kind of freedom in the sense of room for manoeuvre. Room for manoeuvre can take many forms. One example might be the opening of public space for gay, lesbian and bisexual men and women achieved by the Pride parades. An example that we discuss below is the attempt to create some kind of civil society beyond the State-centred arena of politics. We distinguish this in turn from the room for manoeuvre that comes from community (or regional or ethnic) autonomy. Another kind of room for manoeuvre, to which we give more attention, is the economic freedom to pursue livelihoods.

Our goal in this introduction is then to use the study of early modern citizenship to open up the study of citizenship in the contemporary world. We engage with the wide range of cases and approaches offered by our contributors, to raise a series of provocative issues for contemporary citizenship.

Citizenship Beyond Emancipation by the State

The study of early modern citizenship helps to set in relief the self-proclaimed emancipatory project of the modern State, which has sought to roll out citizenship across national territory. The groundwork for this was laid in the cartographic boom of sixteenth-century Europe. Recent research has highlighted the impact of cartography in facilitating a de-socialised conception of space and permitting the erasure of local difference under the imposition of national space. As maps became a significant tool of government, they also played a role in transforming the image of the nation (Buisseret, 1992, 1996). The pioneering work of Morgan and Helgerson demonstrated the cultural impact of the sudden emergence, seemingly out of nowhere, of a visual image of the country in the sixteenth century (Morgan, 1979; Helgerson, 1992). Isin argues in his contribution that governments from the eighteenth century adopted a “scalar” vision of a nation divided into regions that were subdivided into localities. Ramos finds that Liberal governments in nineteenth-century Portugal attempted to apply what we can see as scalar logic to citizenship. He begins by describing the collage of overlapping polities (*concelhos*) in early nineteenth-century Portugal. Ramos stresses that these were not autonomous polities, and that their governments took it upon themselves to reconstruct the Portuguese monarchy from the ground up after the 1808 French invasion. He observes that the Portuguese Liberals subsequently tried to dismantle these polities, which they always suspected of allegiance to the old monarchic regime, and so to reduce them to localities within national territory. Key to this scalar vision, in other words, was the rationalisation of an emancipatory goal through which citizenship, and not just national administration, would be extended across national territory.

Our contributors show, however, that States have never fully made good on their promise to roll out citizenship across national territory. On the one hand, States have struggled for the *means* to achieve this, and have often found themselves settling for a more intricate polity. Lomnitz has argued that the formal extension of citizenship in Mexico was really a degrading of citizenship, since even after the Mexican Revolution

the so-called “citizens” were not actually empowered to shape the future of their national community. We have mentioned Lomnitz’s point that urban communities were the only Mexican polities to have “matched government with the representation of a people”. He also argues that these urban “public spheres” have never been properly linked into a national public sphere; debate in urban communities does not feed into national debate. While claiming to extend citizenship, the Mexican State has negotiated with power brokers of all sorts throughout Mexican territory. Governments sought the help of these brokers to disseminate their elaborate representations of the nation. Brokers were rewarded not with a voice in the national arena, but with certain services for their clientele and the possibility of appropriating a portion of state funds (“corruption”). Groups such as peasants also have some privileged access to State resources in return for their loyalty and their role in the national pageantry of the Mexican Revolution. The nation-state remained a tangled web of polities within polities, not altogether unlike nineteenth-century Portugal. Indeed, Lomnitz queried in the conference the extent to which the nineteenth-century Portuguese Liberals actually dispensed with the *concelhos* in practice, and Ramos acknowledges that even in the 1920s there were attempts to re-establish this kind of citizenship. Within this labyrinth, national citizenship in Mexico meant little more than participating in an elaborate series of festivals (usually linked to mass schooling) and voting in one-party elections (Lomnitz, 2001). Hence Stack’s observation that national citizenship has never quite connected with urban citizenship and has certainly not subsumed it. Meanwhile, Ong has noted of the contemporary world that it is no longer just States that deliver the services needed by citizens. She notes that people make claims on a *range* of agencies, including an infinitude of NGOs and transnational agencies such as the World Bank and the UN (Ong, 2006). These include organisations not recognised by States at all, such as the highly organised brigand groups in the Chad Basin described by Roitman.⁵

On the other hand, States have difficulty rolling out citizenship because certain elements of citizenship elude them. Herzog notes in her contribution that, in early-modern Spain, becoming a citizen of a town or city was a first step towards being a national of the nation. She observes that early modern towns often resisted attempts by the Spanish Crown to fix the criteria for citizenship. Deputies at the 1812 Cortes in Cádiz resisted the proposal that being a native of Spain should be a requirement for citizenship of towns and cities, because that would hand to the Crown the authority to confer citizenship. Towns and cities were interested, of course, in retaining ultimate control of citizenship. However, we take seriously the argument of those deputies at Cádiz that citizenship was a *complex and subtle* business, one that the State could not hope to master.

Citizenship is complex and subtle because it is diverse. This is, after all, why we have proposed using “citizenship” for an open set of elements. Different elements come to the fore in different contexts, and it is often difficult to say where citizenship begins and where it ends. Ong (2006, p. 499) argues that “the different elements of citizenship (rights, entitlements, etc.)... are becoming disarticulated from one another, and re-articulated with universalizing forces and standards”. In fact, citizenship was always thus. Sacks notes in his contribution that writers in sixteenth-century England began splicing together notions of the “corporate freedoms” enjoyed by incorporated towns with the “ancient freedoms” enshrined in Magna Carta, to be enjoyed by all Englishmen. One way of dealing with this complexity has been for States (and other agencies) to devise ever more complex schemata of citizenship. Both Herzog and Ramos describe attempts to come up

with such a schema. In the contemporary world, Soysal (1994) shows how European governments have extended *some* citizenship rights to *some* categories of migrants but not to all. Ong (2006, p. 499) observes that States have designated zones of hyper-growth within national territory, in which certain citizenship rights are suspended. Obvious examples are the *maquiladora* belts along the US–Mexico border and across Central America.

Citizenship also eludes States because it is *demanding*, and this is what we want to stress. In his contribution, Sacks gives a detailed account of how concern with the abuse of “monopoly” grants in sixteenth-century England (the Crown giving patents to its favourites) developed into a much broader concern with freedom. Sacks shows, crucially, that this freedom was held to proceed from membership of communities, because only in this way could freedom have any guarantee. Freedom was never just individual, in other words, but always *freedom of a community*, whether conceived as an urban or national “commonwealth”.⁶ This freedom of community was no formality: citizens had to commit (or even submit) to community in order to guarantee that freedom for themselves and others. Sacks gives the examples of Swallowfield, a community too distant from local government to benefit from its protection, and the fledgling colonial communities of New England. Similarly, in Spain the criteria for early modern citizenship were focused on people’s commitment to particular towns and cities. As Herzog shows, this commitment was often difficult to measure. For example, the commitment of merchants was often contentious in Spain and Spanish America, because the commercial interests that made merchants important *to* communities also gave them commitments *beyond* these communities. “How could a distant State appreciate the subtleties of people’s commitment to community?”, asked the deputies at Cádiz in 1812.⁷ In the contemporary world, commitment remains a key issue for citizenship. This was the case in Tapalpa, a municipal seat in the Sierra de Tapalpa, where Stack found that being “from here” was an important category of town politics. While members of the families considered most obviously “from here”, several of them land-owners, often played a prominent part in town politics, those whom the mayor Aguirre considered not “from here” were liable to have any complaint dismissed. At our conference the urban sociologist Guido Martinotti argued that commitment to contemporary European cities has become a serious issue, because residents are increasingly outnumbered by other city users such as tourists and commuters (Martinotti, 2005). It was also an issue in a town the size of Tapalpa, especially since it had become a popular weekend retreat for middle-class Guadalajarans. Stack often heard Guadalajarans who had bought weekend homes or set up hotels or restaurants in the Sierra, accused of being “not from here” and sidelined from local decision-making.

Notions of commitment *to* community are often accompanied by ideals of life *in* community. These have also ranged widely, but are equally difficult to assess, even by local government. Gordon has noted that concepts of “civility” formed part of the prescriptions for citizenship in early modern London. The punishments prescribed at the London Bridewell, an experimental house of correction that opened its doors in the 1550s, sought to cure both citizens and city of their imperfections. In 1559, for example, John Corbet was released subject to the condition that “if hereafter at any time he behave not him self both in word and deed as becometh an honest, true and quiet citizen” he should pay a £10 fine and “be banished this city for ever” (*Bridewell Court Book*, 1559, f.19r, spelling modernised). Here we see a civic authority attempting to *impose* citizenship on their community, but neighbours could also re-appropriate the economies of behaviour

by vouching for the future conduct of their fellow citizens, becoming in effect the agents and regulators of civility. Stack found in contemporary Tapalpa a notion of civic behaviour being used to distinguish between communities. In 1997, the Tapalpan municipal government refused to raise the civic status of the town of Atacco, the Tapalpan municipal secretary explaining that the people of Atacco lacked sufficient *cultura* to govern themselves. *Cultura* was a quality that comprised, among other things, the far-sighted pursuit of the public good. Stack traced the efforts of an Atacco civic group to counter this prejudice by showing signs of *cultura*, as we explore more fully below (Stack, 2004).

States have attempted to assess these virtues, in conferring and policing citizenship, but have also claimed to *produce* those virtues in their citizens.⁸ They have sought to do this above all through education—hence the Mexican history classes (and parades) described by Stack. Citizenship itself has long been taught in Mexican schools (and more recently in the UK and elsewhere). Many have questioned, however, whether citizenship can really be produced in people by a State. From Sacks and Herzog’s articles, it seems that the thought would have troubled an early modern citizen, while a leading member of the Atacco civic group, Andrés, expressed his support for State schooling, but felt that *cultura* as a quality could only be cultivated outside the school.

States have failed, too, to *map* citizenship onto national territory, however variegated. Gordon has argued that the spatial relationships of the citizen—subject to State and to city are of a different order. In perceptual terms, the city is apprehensible independently of its visual image in a way the nation is not—at least not without metonymic substitutions (Gordon, 2004). The boom in geometric mapping which marked the sixteenth century was accompanied by a simultaneous flourishing of city views—prospects and perspective images such as the six-volume *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*. Yet in these images, clearly distinct from the published geometric maps of territories, the city emerges as an emphatically social space, constructed by and for its citizens (Gordon, 2001). Meanwhile, Isin puts the case that cities, understood not just as an inhabited space but as a kind of social force-field, are *by their nature* irreducible to the scalar vision of States. He argues, for example, that State-imposed borders are often crossed by the force-field of cities. Roitman’s article illustrates Isin’s portrait of cities exceeding both their built-up area and also national borders: “Even though [in the Chad Basin] these networks (military personnel-customs officials) and their sites (borders and hinterlands) are located in rural or peripheral areas, they can be qualified equally as urban phenomena, since they entail symbiotic or even constitutive relations with urban-based commercial, financial, and political spheres” (p. 7). Isin goes on to conclude, provocatively, that cities are real in ways that States have never been.

In other words, States have been unable to wholly appropriate citizenship, not just because they lack the resources to roll out citizenship across national territory, but also because several elements of citizenship—such as commitment and civility—have by their nature eluded the grasp of States.

Citizenship Beyond Making Claims on States

If citizenship is conceived on the State’s terms as a kind of emancipation enacted by the State, citizens get left making claims upon the State for the fruits of that emancipation. Much of Ong’s discussion of citizenship remains preoccupied with the claims people make

on States (although she also treats claims made on other agencies such as NGOs). Early modern citizenship can help us to imagine a citizenship that is not reduced to making claims on States, even if government still plays an important role in citizenship. As our early modern examples show, citizenship has been considered, at certain times and in certain places, as a kind of *room for manoeuvre*. We begin this section by drawing on the articles to conceptualise citizenship as room for manoeuvre, although also confronting the risks of this notion of citizenship. We then suggest, in the second half of the section, that one aspect of this room for manoeuvre is the freedom to pursue livelihoods.

Making Room for Manoeuvre: Insurgent Citizenship

Holston uses the term “insurgent citizenship” to describe contemporary attempts, whether local, regional or transnational, to resist the national-territorial vision of States. Within the contemporary world, Holston (1999, p. 167) finds insurgent citizenships in a range of contexts, such as “in the realm of the homeless, networks of migration, neighborhoods of Queer Nation, autoconstructed peripheries in which the poor build their own homes in precarious material and legal conditions, ganglands, fortified condominiums, employee-owned factories, squatter settlements, suburban migrant labour camps, sweatshops, and the zones of the so-called new racism”. Holston’s inventory prompts us to rethink citizenship as a kind of room for manoeuvre, in which citizens keep their distance from States, without renouncing all claims on States. We draw on the articles of this special issue to explore what this room for manoeuvre might look like in practice.

Keeping a distance from States is more difficult than it sounds, especially in the contemporary world. It is difficult, to begin with, because of the governmental services offered by States, which have multiplied since the early modern period. Another conference participant, the historian Robert von Friedeburg, noted that European cities relied increasingly on States to police their streets during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as their population was swelled by rural immigrants. Expansions in State control themselves fed off expansions in State infrastructure. For example, the cultural historian Joachim Schlör has shown the close connection between the developing provision of public lighting, that was to open up the cultural site of night in the city, and the security measures implemented by the State in response to the moral anxieties unleashed by the illumination of the night (Schlör, 1998). We discuss below the role of government in providing security, and we have noted already that Marshall used the term “social rights” to describe the vastly increased role of government by the mid-twentieth century.

Keeping a distance from States is also difficult because of the State’s claim on sovereignty within national territory, even if this claim has never been fully realized. Sacks, Herzog, Gordon and others bear witness to the struggle of towns and cities to negotiate autonomy with monarchs, and their ingenuity in devising formulae that could accommodate sovereignty. Some towns claimed to subject themselves, as *fictae personae*, to the Crown, while Sacks notes that the citizens of Swallowfield sought a kind of “self-government at the King’s command” (Collinson, cited in Sacks, p. 24). Gordon has observed that negotiations of sovereignty and autonomy were often played out in and around processions (Gordon, 2001). The act of Royal entry entailed the reconfirmation of the city’s customary privileges and charters; a reminder that it derived its political autonomy from the grant of the monarch (Jacquot, 1975). These communities were aware

that ceremonies and forms of address both constituted and represented a real authority. Indeed, while questions of counsel and the commonwealth might be debated, the exercise of authority was arguably always understood as the function of the monarch. This was perhaps why the Portuguese rural communes were so anxious to accommodate the monarchy within their reconstruction of the State after 1808. Meanwhile, Gordon argues that the Crown relied in turn upon the city to stage an effective accessional welcome that would legitimise and enact the sovereign's authority (Bryant, 1986; Attreed, 1994). Urban processional culture could, in other words, transform the city into the site of sovereignty, providing the occasions described by Thomas Dekker: "when the heape of our Soueraignes Kingdomes are drawne in Little: and to be seene within the Walles of this City" (Dekker, 1958, Vol. 3, p. 231). Lomnitz has shown that in twentieth-century Mexico, the State relied on urban communities and other collectives to stage the nationalist parades and ceremonies that shored up its sovereignty (Lomnitz, 2001).

Hobbes warned of the dangers inherent in "mixed polities", as Sacks reminds us. The political scientist José Antonio Aguilar cites Hobbes to argue that community autonomy has been a threat to effective citizenship in Mexico. Aguilar blames the Mexican State for this, because it has failed to provide public services, including justice and security, leaving these in the hands of collectives, such as urban communities. By dealing with such collectives, the Mexican State has itself *hindered* the emergence of "an autonomous and responsible citizenship", and Aguilar notes that community autonomy has been used to justify a variety of nefarious practices, including lynching (Aguilar Rivera, 2004). Roitman's account of northern Cameroon offers other examples of collectives operating in the absence of State authority.⁹ By contrast, Sacks seems to agree with the early moderns who felt that "citizenship in local communities [was] no necessary rival to the state, but potentially the foundation on which rest the duties of citizen service and from which develops the sovereign power of the state" (p. 27). He might also agree with the attempt by Portuguese Liberals to accept affiliation to *concelhos* or *comunas* as a form of "junior citizenship" (although Ramos notes that the Liberals never overcame their suspicion of the monarchism of the *comunas*).

Collective autonomy is, in any case, only one example of room for manoeuvre. The Atacco civic group were concerned less with autonomy than with marking out a public arena that was not dominated by the State. The group member Andrés insisted that their activities were concerned with *cultura* and not with *política* (politics), associating the latter with groups who pursued private interests or contented themselves with the benefits of office holding. In branding their projects as *cultura*, Andrés drew attention to their lofty motives. They denied ambitions of financial reward or political office; no strings, such as votes, were attached to their projects; and they chose projects of obvious benefit to the community. Crucially, this was no localist rejection of the nation-state. On the one hand, the Atacco group played a part in organising nationalist events such as the Fiestas Patrias, and were also prepared to make demands on the State, such as for better schooling in Atacco. On the other hand, the Mexican State had itself invested in notions of *cultura*, having undertaken decades of "Cultural Missions" to emancipate Mexico's rural masses living in far-flung parts of its national territory. Despite engaging with the State, the Atacco group were keen to keep their distance, by using *cultura* to open up some room for manoeuvre beyond the sphere of *política*. We have seen that Andrés denied that *cultura* came from State schooling, or indeed from its Cultural Missions. Instead, the group were keen to embody and cultivate *cultura* themselves, together with other inhabitants of the

town. This was less a declaration of autonomy than, in common with other notions of civil society, a way of getting around the State without renouncing all claims on it.

We note in passing that, whereas Holston offers examples of insurgent citizenship *in* the city, Andrés was articulating a citizenship *of* his town and not just in it. Andrés used *cultura* as a sign that Atacco was no mere rural locality on the fringes, but a proper town in which *cultura* was at home. By the same token, the group were not just rural denizens awaiting emancipation at the hands of the State, but good citizens of what they considered a proper town. The group's notion of civil society was closely tied, in other words, to their notion of urban society. Not surprisingly, part of their project was to make Atacco look more like a proper town. Key in this regard was an attempt to turn the churchyard into a civic plaza, replacing the plaza on which the primary school had been built. This kind of citizenship has a strong parallel in early modern urban corporations investing in the fabric of civic life, from municipal benches to the architecture of the market place (Tittler, 1991, 1998). We also note that for Isin, all citizenship is urban in that it is produced not just in or of but *through* the city, understood as a kind of force field.

What we stress is that citizenship, whether urban, national or otherwise, can be conceived as freedom in the sense of room for manoeuvre, rather than just as a way of making claims on the State. In other words, autonomy is not just something to be asserted by towns or regions or by ethnic or national groups, but by *all* citizens of a community, whether that community is national, urban or some other kind. This is presumably the sense of "autonomous" that Aguilar has in mind when he argues that the Mexican State has stifled the development of "an autonomous and responsible citizenship". Arguably all States impede such autonomy simply by their attempts to appropriate citizenship. In that sense, all citizenship must be insurgent, in the face of States who want to monopolise it.

Freedom to Pursue Livelihood: Economic Aspects of Room for Manoeuvre

An important aspect of citizenship as room for manoeuvre is the freedom to pursue livelihood. It is often argued that citizenship requires some kind of personal economic autonomy, and this is used to explain the fact that private property was once a prerequisite for formal citizenship. But Sacks argues that livelihood in the early modern period was much more than this. He notes that in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, the category of citizens or "freemen" was defined in opposition to the category of "bondsmen": those who could not labour as they chose, such as villeins, serfs and slaves. Livelihood was not just a prerequisite, but the *essence* of what it meant to be a citizen, entailing the ability to make a living that was reasonably secure and not utterly dependent on others—hence, the early modern opposition to royal monopoly grants, which were felt to endanger the independent livelihood of craftsmen and other interested parties.

Governments can play important roles in the freedom to pursue livelihoods. To begin with, governments can help provide *security*. Security against physical threats, both internal and external to national territory, was already at stake in early modern Europe, and sorely wanting in areas such as the contemporary Chad Basin. "Social rights" such as state pensions and health provision have given a broader security to citizens, as has the effective management of national economies. Governments have also played roles in permitting a degree of economic *independence*, such as in passing and enforcing labour laws or through land reforms. For example, the Mexican State used its power in the 1920s and 1930s to appropriate land from the *hacienda* estates that held their workers in debt bondage.

In 1929, it founded an *ejido* collective in Atacco on lands that had belonged to a *hacienda* in Tapalpa, and in 1992 more than half the population of Atacco were still members of the *ejido*.

In only a few regions of the world have many people achieved a secure and independent livelihood. Contemporary examples of “bondsmen” include the maids, factory workers and prostitutes living in slave-like conditions in Southeast Asia, as described by Ong (2006, p. 504). In the case of Atacco, *ejido* members had made some kind of reasonably secure if meagre living, although their *ejido* land was held from the State. Men had begun to supplement their income by working on building sites in Guadalajara or in and around Tapalpa, while women and children worked as maids in Tapalpa and Guadalajara. As elsewhere in the developing world, much of this work was “informal” (or unregulated by the State), with no official contracts or benefits. After a 1992 constitutional reform, *ejido* members were allowed to sell plots of land. Many did so, especially after the financial crisis of 1994, which curtailed the weekend visits of the urban middle classes on which many residents depended for employment. Stack was told that Atacco residents would have gone hungry had the financial crisis not coincided with the corn harvest. By 2000, only eight years after obtaining the right to sell *ejido* land, most people worked solely in the informal economy, and few had anything resembling a secure livelihood. For many the most attractive option lay in migration to the USA, and this practice gathered pace through the 1990s.

In other words, States have often failed to provide security and independence, and there is little reason to expect better from States in the future. In west Mexico, many people benefited from the land reform of the 1920s and 1930s, but peasants became less citizens than clients of the Mexican State.¹⁰ More recently, Mexico has undergone a “transition to democracy”, but it is not clear that this will deliver anything resembling security and independence. Lomnitz writes that Mexican elections used to be another charade, together with the civic festivals that we have mentioned, in which collectives participated in return for benefits. Elections are now, by contrast, the focus of intense competition between political parties, each investing large sums of money in mass-media campaigns. Those campaigns are financed by the bourgeois groups whose interests they have come to represent, but many other groups are left in a weaker position than ever. Previously Mexico’s poorest had received some benefits, if not a voice, for their role in the national pageantry of one-party elections and civic festivals. With the displacement of national pageantry by electoral competition conducted via mass media, the poor have little to offer for the benefits they need more than ever (Lomnitz, 2001). Meanwhile, Ong (2006, p. 504) finds that people in dire circumstances are sometimes attended to in the name of a “right to survival” rather than citizenship, and adds that “it is by no means clear that the right to survival will anywhere be translated into citizenship or merely legitimated on the grounds of a common humanity, or relevance to labour markets”.¹¹

Many people decide to ignore the State, while others are ignored *by* the State. The global expansion of the “informal” economy testifies to the failure of many States to provide the conditions for the pursuit of livelihoods. Kruijt (2004, p. 2) has argued, for example, that “Latin America is the continent where in most of the countries the great majority of the population is, at once, poor, informal and excluded”. States do not like being ignored, and people often find themselves threatened by States, on top of their other difficulties. There are millions of Mexicans and other nationals now living clandestine lives in the USA, as in other wealthy countries, and Ong makes much of the predicament

of the migrant worker. However, there are also tens of millions of Mexicans living clandestine lives *in Mexico*, because their livelihood, already precarious, is constantly at risk from crackdowns on “irregular” businesses and so on. In Atacco, many of those who sold their *ejido* plots went from being clients of the State to avoiding the State’s attentions altogether, whether in the Sierra or in California. Something similar is the case in the Chad Basin, where livelihoods are shut down not just by the State but by any number of “regulatory authorities”. In such conditions, State intervention serves to limit further the meagre options open to people.

We propose that citizenship beyond the State has something to offer people whose livelihood is under threat from the State. In particular, people can find legitimacy in a citizenship conceived as the room for manoeuvre deriving from the freedom to pursue livelihoods. In other words, the elements of citizenship that we have seen as central to early-modern concerns and practices, might just have something to offer the contemporary world. Some groups in the contemporary world may already assert some notion of citizenship as freedom to pursue livelihood. One candidate might be the *Villes Mortes* movement in northern Cameroon, described by Roitman. Both unlicensed traders and established urban merchants refused to pay taxes to the Cameroonian government, on the grounds that the State had failed in its responsibility to manage society, and specifically to guarantee their “right to markets”. In fact, the *Villes Mortes* protestors appeared to have given up on citizenship altogether. It was the local Prefect who seemed to appropriate the discourse of citizenship, in claiming that people refusing to pay the tax were “not free men” (although Roitman suggests that the Prefect’s notion of freedom was inflected by both Islamic and French colonial traditions). Nevertheless, given the poignancy of the *Villes Mortes* movement’s name, the editors speculate that the traders and merchants possessed *some* concept of a citizenship beyond the State, one that played the *villes* off against the “nation” claimed by the State. Roitman also notes that unregulated traders sometimes styled their activities as “democratization”, even though she feels that they understood by this simply “freedom from tax” (p. 15).

There are other cases that suggest a clearer notion of citizenship as freedom to pursue livelihood, but such citizenship does not necessarily benefit those most in need of it. Sacks cites the complaint of the early modern “Discourse on Corporations” that the incorporation of towns “profited members of the corporation to the detriment of the urban community as a whole” (p. 9). In the case of contemporary Tapalpa, we have noted that some townspeople tried to sideline Guadalajarans on the grounds that they were “not from here”, thus asserting a kind of urban citizenship of Tapalpa. However, it was local businessmen and women who were the quickest to do this, keen to protect their customers and labour from the competition of Guadalajarans doing business in Tapalpa. The same businessmen and women insisted (although often in vain) that the municipal government give them precedence over their Guadalajaran competitors.

A more promising case is that of the barter clubs that spread across Argentina during the 1990s, mushrooming to over a million members after the financial collapse of 2001. Argentineans flocked to trade basic goods, using a currency limited to the clubs. The economist Ruth Pearson (2003, p. 225) has noted that, unlike barter clubs in the developed world, most members entered the clubs out of economic necessity rather than ideological imperatives. It may be, however, that some members experienced the barter clubs as more than just a desperate scuffle for survival. For one thing, they offered a way to recover dignity. In the words of one unemployed man, “if you don’t have that bit of paper called

money ... you feel discriminated against ... that you are no use, you have no value, you are outside society. *This is a new society and we are all part of it* (2003, pp. 225–226, emphasis added). Sacks notes that the early modern residents of Swallowfield and the New England colonies sought to secure their livelihood by committing to a community of equals, and the Argentinean barter club members might also be said to seek a kind of livelihood in community. Barter clubs were subject to abuse, and it is interesting that in 2002 the State considered giving legal recognition to their limited currencies, in order to prosecute forgers (Pearson, 2003, p. 228). However, we propose that the barter clubs were still an example of people seeking room for manoeuvre for themselves as citizens.

No doubt our notion of citizenship as the room for manoeuvre stemming from the freedom to pursue livelihood, has something in common with neoliberal versions of citizenship. It could be argued that the Argentinean barter clubs played out neoliberal notions of citizenship, even as they blamed neoliberalism for their plight.¹² We propose, however, that neoliberal States have kept a tight grip on citizens and citizenship, even as they scale back the claims “their” citizens can make. Ong gives the example of the British government under Tony Blair, “no longer interested in taking care of every citizen, [preferring] him/her to act as a free subject who self-actualizes and relies on autonomous action to confront globalized insecurities”.¹³ But while neoliberal States take less care of their citizens, they are as keen as ever to make claims *on* their citizens. The same British government has presided over unprecedented levels of surveillance and data prostitution, and other States are no less keen to police their citizens’ every move. Neoliberal States have also been ruthless in expanding their fiscal base, as Roitman discusses for Cameroon, while weakening the labour laws protecting their citizens’ livelihood, in order to attract investment. Small wonder that so many people prefer to take their chances as unregulated traders, rather than work for companies that may pay taxes but otherwise feel little obligation to their employees. We argue that neoliberal States have failed to produce the “free subject who self-actualizes” precisely because they have continued to act as States, by reserving their rights on citizenship.

Taking Citizenship Back

We started by explaining that we regard citizenship as a complex of elements that vary across time and space, and our contributors each use the term in slightly different ways, reflecting the different contexts that they study as well as their different disciplinary approaches. All our contributors point to ways of thinking citizenship as something other than just a relationship with States. Inspired by their attempts to think beyond State-centred citizenship, we have drawn a contrast in this introduction between citizenship as emancipation by the State and citizenship as a way of making room for manoeuvre. We have proposed, moreover, that citizenship beyond the State has something to offer the many people who need legitimacy for their struggles to create some room for manoeuvre in their lives. This includes the many people currently living clandestine or semi-clandestine lives, such as unregulated traders and illegal immigrants. Our aim, in other words, is not to persuade States to admit more people to citizenship, or to give “substance” to the (legal) “form” of citizenship, or to encourage people to “participate” and take a more “active” role as citizens, although these may all be valid goals and have certainly been much discussed. Instead, we propose that such people take citizenship back from the States that have so often let them down.

Notes

- ¹ The editors would like to thank the contributors to this special issue, as well as Barry Hindess and Lucy Taylor, for their helpful comments on drafts of this introduction. Stack would like to thank the British Academy and Carnegie Trust for grants to conduct field work in Mexico.
- ² We might call this a republican concept of citizenship, but for the fact that the term “republican” is now used in such a variety of ways and a full discussion of the debates around republican citizenship cannot be accommodated here.
- ³ The conference was funded by the Sawyer Mellon Foundation, and hosted by the Centre for Early Modern Studies. We would like to thank Howard Hotson, Cathy Shrank and Phil Withington, who devised an initial programme of Sawyer Seminars in 2003–2004 and supported the staging of our conference. We would also like to thank our conference respondent, the political theorist Richard Dagger.
- ⁴ The conference focused on early modern European traditions of urban citizenship, but most speakers also highlighted the imperial contexts in which those traditions developed. (Indeed, colonialism is a theme that runs through all of these articles, although we lack space to do justice to this in our introduction.) Isin goes further in his article, however, to suggest that cities *everywhere* have produced some kind of citizenship. For Isin, it is the project of the modern State that is specific to the European context—citizenship itself is a much broader phenomenon.
- ⁵ In some cases, there is no clear line between State and non-State agencies. Roitman’s mototaxi-driver pays “tax”, he says, in the form of bribes to policemen, while many customs officials moonlight as brigands.
- ⁶ Although the decision by Cádiz deputies to exclude Africans from citizenship might seem merely racial, it was also posed in terms of commitment. Some of the deputies argued that Africans were taken to Spanish America against their will, and therefore could not properly be called natives. Some deputies also felt that Africans lacked the commitment to community shown by Spaniards and Indians. Africans were too individual—however strange that might seem to our liberal sensibilities.
- ⁷ The anthropologist Teresa Caldeira has argued, drawing on her fieldwork in Brazil, that cities are in a better position to judge citizenship than States (Caldeira, 1999).
- ⁸ Hindess has argued that the idea of emancipation by the State arose out of European colonialism. The imperial States refused citizenship to colonial subjects on the grounds that they lacked the qualities that made for citizenship. After independence, the new national States claimed to emancipate their citizens by educating them in those same qualities. The former imperial States followed suit with their own citizens. In other words, States claimed to make people *into* (better) citizens, rather than simply admitting them *as* citizens. Hindess also notes that colonialism brought people worldwide into the ambit of States, dividing up their populations among these States. Organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations have used the logic of citizenship to distribute people among States (Hindess, 2005).
- ⁹ Aguilar Rivera (2004) recalls that Tocqueville praised the Americans for responding to blocked roads by “associating” with other individuals to clear them, rather than appealing to government. He notes the irony that Mexican collectives are wont to make claims on the State precisely by *blocking* roads.
- ¹⁰ Roitman notes of recent events in Cameroonian society that: “‘rights’ have been construed in terms that evoke the economic, and especially the citizen’s economic *relations to the state* and socio-economic entitlements” (emphasis added). Roitman goes on to observe that “the ultimate referent is not necessarily the ‘welfare state’; rather, the right to accumulation and the right to access wealth are the primary allusions to the constitution and enactment of citizenship”. It is hard to be sure whether this includes any sense of livelihood in community, or whether this kind of accumulation works against the freedom of others.
- ¹¹ Ong finds that NGOs in Southeast Asia argue less for human rights than for the “biowelfare” of their clients, by appealing to the interest of employers in keeping their workers healthy and thus productive. Ong (2006, p. 504) concludes that “While citizenship does not provide protection for the migrant worker, the joining of a healthy body and dependency on foreign workers produces a kind of biolegitimacy that is perhaps a first step toward the recognition of their moral status, but short of human rights”.
- ¹² Pearson (2003, p. 226) notes that local politicians, including the mayor of Buenos Aires, gave timely expression of their support for the movement, just as the Congress considered legalising it.
- ¹³ In the case of Argentina, it was the neoliberal State itself that exposed its citizens to “globalized insecurities” by acceding to the IMF and World Bank’s demands.

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