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To cite this article: Monica W. Varsanyi (2006) Interrogating “Urban Citizenship” vis-à-vis Undocumented Migration, *Citizenship Studies*, 10:2, 229-249, DOI: [10.1080/13621020600633168](https://doi.org/10.1080/13621020600633168)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13621020600633168>



Published online: 22 Aug 2006.



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Interrogating “Urban Citizenship” *vis-à-vis* Undocumented Migration

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ABSTRACT *This article critically interrogates the emerging literature on cities and citizenship, with specific reference to undocumented, “illegal”, or irregular migrant status. It first identifies and discusses three major approaches in the cities and citizenship literature, namely: normative, rescaling, and agency-centered approaches. It then interrogates this literature through the lens of migrant legal status and entertains a normative vision of urban citizenship in which a person would become a “citizen” not by explicit consent of fellow citizens, but merely by presence and residence in a place. While the immediate possibilities for such an unbounded, “grounded” citizenship are small, the article takes lessons from this model and discusses a fourth approach to cities and citizenship which explores the contemporary creation of urban “citizenship” policies for undocumented migrants in the United States. It concludes by discussing four brief examples of these local policies: (1) the contemporary struggle to reinstate local noncitizen voting, (2) the increasing acceptance of matrículas consulares as a valid form of identification for undocumented Mexican residents, and the debates over whether or not states should (3) issue driver licenses to undocumented migrants and (4) allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition for public colleges and universities.*

Global cities are spaces where the very meaning, content and extent of citizenship are being made and transformed. (Isin, 2000, p. 6)

... It’s ridiculous that becoming a citizen in the US is a problem. I’ve been here for 17 years! This is my home. You need to make a difference where you live! (Undocumented resident of Los Angeles¹)

Introduction

As a consequence of a growing schism between *de jure* citizenship policies which link a person’s citizenship to membership and presence in a territorial nation-state, and the growing *de facto* long-term residence of noncitizens within those same territorial nation-states, scholars of citizenship and migration have started to entertain possibilities of

rescaling formal state membership. Indeed, in this current migratory context, a system which not only assumes that each person “belongs” to one of the 190 or so states in the world and is either located in that state, or has migrated and is in the process of changing citizenship affiliation, is certainly losing saliency. This literature has ranged from those who explore the possibilities and pitfalls of global/cosmopolitan/postnational citizenship (Pogge, 1992; Soysal, 1994; Held, 1995; Archibugi *et al.*, 1998; Hutchings and Dannreuther, 1999; Calhoun, 2003), supranational citizenship (Kofman, 1995, 2002; Leitner, 1997; Wiener, 1997; Martiniello, 2000; Follesdal, 2001; Lehning, 2001), transnational citizenship (Rouse, 1991; Basch *et al.*, 1994; Jacobson, 1996; Mountz and Wright, 1996; Sassen, 1996; Isin, 1997; Jones-Correa, 1998; Ong, 1999; Fitzgerald, 2000; Itzigsohn, 2000; Bauböck, 2003a; Johnston, 2003; Smith, 2003; Gilbertson, 2004; Nagel and Staeheli, 2004), and a group which I call the “post-postnationals”, who take into account the contradictions of nation-state citizenship in a migratory world, yet in different ways, argue that nation-state citizenship and state context are still central to the livelihoods of contemporary migrants (Bhabha, 1999; Hollifield, 2000; Kofman, 2002; Nagel, 2002; Joppke and Morawska, 2003; Koopmans and Statham, 2003; Morris, 2003; Benhabib, 2004; Bloemraad, 2004; Skrbis *et al.*, 2004; Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2004).

In this article, I turn my sights specifically to another facet of this emerging literature: that which explores the connections between *the city* and citizenship. The prominence of scales other than the nation-state is a matter of debate, but it is clear that social and political theory developed at a time in which the nation-state was uncritically assumed to be the container of society is less relevant in a world cross-cut by global processes. Seeking to remedy this neglect of the spatial and to escape the “territorial trap” of the nation-state in political thinking (Agnew and Corbridge, 1995), a number of scholars have begun to explore the connection between the city and citizenship, with the ultimate intent that the city, long subservient to the nation-state, again be considered a legitimate object of political thought, specifically as a locus for citizenship in a globalizing, migratory world (Magnusson, 1996; Scott, 1998; Bauman, 1999; Bender, 1999; Thom, 1999; Dagger, 2000; Soja, 2000; Isin, 2002; Bauböck, 2003b; Purcell, 2003; Sassen, 2003; Bashevkin, 2005). The topic is receiving sustained scholarly attention. In 1996, James Holston and Arjun Appadurai co-edited an issue of *Public Culture* titled “Cities and citizenship”, and in 1999 Engin Isin edited a special issue of the journal *Citizenship Studies*, entitled “Cities and citizenship in a global age”.² Mike Douglass and John Friedmann published an edited volume, *Cities for Citizens: Planning and the Rise of Civil Society in a Global Age* (1998), and Isin has published an edited book, *Democracy, Citizenship, and the Global City* (2000), which built upon the momentum of the *Citizenship Studies* special issue. Finally, a recent special issue of *Urban Geography* (2003), edited by geographer Lynn Staeheli, has also tackled the question of cities and citizenship.

However, while exploring a wide range of important concerns, one issue with which much of this emerging literature on contemporary migration and the rescaling of citizenship does not grapple directly is that of undocumented or “illegal” migrant status. Linda Bosniak, a noted legal scholar of undocumented migration and citizenship, argues that questions of boundaries, exclusivity, and access to citizenship are generally non-issues for theorists and critics of citizenship, who more frequently write under the assumption of universality and the *de jure* impossibility of second-class membership. These theorists begin their discussions under the assumption that everyone has, at the very least, *formal* access to citizenship rights. What they do not take into

account, she argues, is the growing body of individuals—primarily undocumented residents or “irregular” migrants—living within the territory of the liberal democratic state who do not have access to formal citizenship and are at the mercy of state power (Bosniak, 2000). While a number of scholars working in this field begin with an acknowledgment of migration as a justification for pursuing a rescaled citizenship, they less often take “illegal” or undocumented migrants and residents into account when exploring rescaled possibilities. As I argue in this article, neglecting migrants’ legal status compromises the power and saliency of this literature, particularly at a time when unauthorized migration has become a prominent characteristic of the global migratory landscape.

In this article, I first identify and discuss three major approaches in the literature on cities and citizenship, namely: normative, rescaling, and agency-centered approaches. I then interrogate this literature through the lens of migrant legal status and entertain a normative vision of urban citizenship in which a person would become a “citizen” not by explicit consent of fellow citizens, but merely by presence and residence in a place. While the immediate possibilities for such an unbounded, “grounded” citizenship are slim, I take lessons from this model and discuss a fourth approach to cities and citizenship which explores contemporary “local citizenship” policy formation for undocumented migrants. I conclude by discussing four brief examples of this local citizenship policy formation in the United States: (1) the contemporary struggle to reinstate local noncitizen voting, (2) the increasing acceptance of the *matrículas consulares* as a valid form of identification for undocumented Mexican residents, and the debates over whether or not states should (3) issue driver licenses to undocumented migrants and (4) allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition for public colleges and universities.

The City and Citizenship

The etymology of the word *citizenship* reveals its urban origins: there is a clear connection, for instance, between the word *citizen* and the word that we now translate in English as *city-state*.³ Given strong historical and etymological connections between the city and citizenship, and the changing role of the nation-state in the globalizing economy, it is perhaps not surprising that various theorists of citizenship are turning their focus towards the city as a possible locus for political belonging. This emerging literature on cities and citizenship can be loosely divided into three groups: normative, rescaling, and agency-centered.⁴

Normative Approaches: Cities and Cosmopolitan/Transnational Citizenship

In these theorizations, traditional understandings of citizenship are unmoored from their source of legitimacy at the scale of the nation-state, and transcend these boundaries to be legitimated within the transnational network of global cities, supra-/international human rights regime, or cosmopolitan ideals of world citizenship (Pogge, 1992; Held, 1995; Sassen, 1996, 2000; Isin, 1997; Archibugi *et al.*, 1998; Turner, 2000; Urry, 2000; Wekerle, 2000). Importantly, while there is a voluminous and growing literature on various facets of cosmopolitanism and transnationalism, broadly speaking, these particular theorists are particularly concerned with cities as the spaces and places which might provide the rooted context in which transnational and cosmopolitan political identities could develop.

Discussions of transnational urban citizenship are most frequently being formulated by those working within the global cities literature, who propose a citizenship which is decreasingly situated at the scale of the nation-state, and is rather a political identity associated with the transnational network and space of flows between the urban nodes in the transnational global city network. For instance, in a genealogical account of the city and citizenship, Engin Isin (1997) proposes the emergence of the “new professional class-as-transnational citizen”, in contradistinction to the Greek citizen of the classical city-state, or the modern citizen of the territorial, sovereign nation-state. Also drawing upon the idea of global city networks, Saskia Sassen discusses the emergence of the “transnational immigrant” and “transnational corporate” citizen, who are evolving simultaneously with the “new transnational geography” which, in a recent essay, she entertains as a possible “space for a new transnational politics” (1996, 1998).

Theorists of cosmopolitan citizenship are more concerned with normative models in which “citizenship would be extended, in principle, to membership in all cross-cutting political communities, from the local to the global” (Held, 1995, p. 272). Cosmopolitan theorists can be further divided into those who are concerned with legal or moral cosmopolitanism, where legal cosmopolitanism “is committed to a concrete political ideal of a global order under which all persons have equivalent legal rights and duties, that is, are fellow citizens of a universal republic”, and moral cosmopolitanism which “holds that all persons stand in certain moral relations to one another”, and that “every human being has a global stature as an ultimate unit of moral concern” (Pogge, 1992, p. 49).

While most discussions of cosmopolitan citizenship transcend the boundaries of the nation-state and are not rooted or grounded in a particular place (see, for instance, Hutchings and Dannreuther’s otherwise excellent *Cosmopolitan Citizenship*, 1999), there are several important exceptions which inform the interplay of cities and citizenship. These visions of cosmopolitan citizenship are rooted in the city but not territorially bounded, and draw legitimacy from, depending on the theorist, the international human rights legal regime, moral imperatives, or natural law. For example, Beck (2004) and Mazlish (2005) both discuss the fact that the cosmopolitan must be, at some point, rooted and local. Cosmopolitan citizenship must necessarily be of humanity, and in this sense, located somewhere. As Mazlish writes, cosmopolitanism “... emerges from local conditions and can serve local purposes” (p. 102). Gerda Wekerle provides an empirical example of rooted cosmopolitanism in her contribution to *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City* (Isin, 2000). She explores the way in which women in the third world make citizenship claims upon the city by drawing upon international human rights discourses, and that their “... claims to urban citizenship often take spatial and territorial forms as women map out place-based strategies in opening up new political spaces in cities” (2000, p. 210). In her approach, the global city serves primarily as the staging ground of a universal cosmopolitan citizenship, as opposed to a concrete place which influences the substance of this citizenship.

Rescaling Approaches: Urban Citizenship

The second group of theorists discusses the need for and possibilities of a distinct urban citizenship which is defined by membership and residence in the (global) city (Bauböck, 1994, 2003b; Bauböck and Rundell, 1998; Scott, 1998; Beauregard and Bounds, 2000; Brodie, 2000; Ford, 2001, Purcell, 2003). These scholars take their inspiration from two

sources. First, explorations of urban citizenship are inspired, in part, by changes taking place in the European Union. As an aspect of the continuing integration of the EU, the Maastricht Treaty institutionalized a novel, multi-scalar citizenship regime.⁵ Nationals of member states are now eligible for three types of citizenship: conventional nation-state citizenship in their home state; supranational, EU-wide citizenship which enables one to vote in elections for the EU Parliament; and an urban citizenship, which gives nationals of EU member states the right to vote in local elections should they be living outside of their country of origin. So, for example, a French citizen living in Paris would be eligible for all of the rights and obligations available to French citizens, including the right to vote in elections for the EU Parliament. If this French citizen should move to Rome, she would not be eligible to vote in Italy-wide elections, as this would be considered an inappropriate interference in Italian sovereignty, but would still be eligible to vote in EU-wide elections, as well as local elections in her city of residence.⁶

Second, much of the normative scholarship on the possibility of a bounded urban citizenship is currently being produced by those who are engaged with the global cities literature. Somewhat differently from those, like Saskia Sassen, who focus on the transnational networks linking global cities as potential spaces for an emergent political identity, these scholars focus more specifically on the possibility and necessity of a citizenship which is detached from the scale of the nation-state and which is legitimized at the scale of the urban. Additionally, they argue that democratic political structures must be created which can effectively counter the undemocratic and non-participatory processes of neoliberal economic restructuring (Magnusson, 1996; Keil, 1998; Isin, 1999; Purcell, 2003). As a remedy to this scalar mismatch, these authors are, in essence, urging that fire be fought with fire. If decision-making regarding the production of urban space is increasingly distant from the urban residents who are directly affected by these decisions, a novel urban citizenship must be developed which mirrors neoliberal economic power flows and structures. For example, in his book, *Regions and the World Economy*, Allen Scott notes that along with institution of regional *economic* governance, there are few, if any, political institutions which enable urban or regional citizenship, "as a civil attribute obtained by residency in a particular place, which carries with it substantive rights and obligations peculiar to that place" (1998, p. 156).

Rainer Bauböck (2003b) provides us with the most articulate and well-developed interrogation of a rescaled urban citizenship to date. He speculates what an "urban citizenship" might look like, tackles "... constitutional questions of municipal self-government from a democratic theory perspective ..." and explores the very specific challenges which would face a nascent urban citizenship (2003b, p. 141). In doing so, he:

... criticize[s] postmodern perspectives that disregard the territorial bases and boundaries of democratic self-government. Without these, urban citizenship would be reduced to a bundle of universal negative liberties provided by national or supranational institutions and would lose its significance as a status of equal membership in a shared political space. (2003b, p. 141)

In other words, it's one thing to propose urban citizenship as a remedy for democratic poverty in a migratory and/or neoliberal age. It is another thing entirely to entertain how this might actually work geographically and institutionally. For instance, in an extremely literal sense, where should boundaries be drawn around the city, which

demarcate who belongs within (and is a citizen) and who is excluded? As Bauböck contemplates, it would be essential to include a city's periphery (or its zone of influence) within its political borders (2003b, p. 142). Of course, as he notes, doing this would be extremely complicated for a number of reasons, such as deciding which peripheral communities and suburbs were within the influence of the city, and furthermore, developing a democratic structure whereby this decision regarding boundaries could even be made. If a vote were to be taken whether or not to include a peripheral community, should the vote be restricted to those living in the city? Should it also include residents in the community in question?

Neither should an existing peripheral community be swallowed up by a large city against its will, nor should the population of the city be forced to accept the admission of an area into their jurisdiction that they do not want to admit. (2003b, p. 143)

Furthermore, he argues for the importance of the city and urban citizenship as being increasingly autonomous relative to other scales of government, which brings up another important challenge. If cities are to be "... exempted from certain aspects of national government monopolies in immigration, trade and foreign policy" (2003b, p. 149) how will membership be decided? While states rely upon *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* policies for formal membership, cities currently rely upon the more basic standards of *jus domicili*, or membership acquired through residence. Would cities have to change their entry and exit regulations to match the sovereign rights currently exercised by the nation-state (2003b, p. 150)? He also discusses tricky questions relating to multiple local citizenships and the importance of local voting being available to noncitizens, as well as citizens.

Agency-Centered Approaches: Citizenship as a Contested Identity

The third group approaches the city as the physical place and context in which residents constitute the meaning and practice of citizenship (Pincetl, 1994; Siemiatycki and Isin, 1997; Friedmann and Lehrer, 1998; Kofman, 1998; Holston, 1999a,b; Rocco, 1999; Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003; Secor, 2003, 2004; Staeheli, 2003; Staeheli and Clarke, 2003). Generally speaking, these authors approach their investigations with an understanding of citizenship as a *process*, as opposed to *static* legal status. By understanding citizenship as an institution which is constantly being challenged and reshaped by city residents, rights-claiming activities which are on the margins of formal citizenship are still part of the process of citizenship formation and may be hints for future reconfigurations in its territorial and substantive foundation. Furthermore, in this approach, the city and citizenship are mutually constitutive, as "inclusive socioterritorial concept[s] of urban struggle" and goals of "spatial justice" emerge (Keil, 1998; Soja, 2000). For instance, the city (with its globalizing economy, labor markets, migrant networks, and so on) attracts new migrants and residents, who in turn appropriate and create new urban spaces in which to claim their rights as valid members of the urban public, which in turn places pressures on and shapes the meaning of citizenship in these cities, at the same time as the urban economy continues to evolve and shift, attracting new migrants who put forth new rights claims.

Much of this scholarship approaches the constitution of citizenship as a grassroots political process. As the gap widens between the promises of formal citizenship and the realities of exclusion in the city, urban residents are creating "spaces of insurgent citizenship" from which to demand their rights as valid members of the urban public (Holston, 1999a,b). Stephanie Pincetl (1994) discusses three instances of "political participation without citizenship in Los Angeles": first, the emergence of a community group for residents of the predominantly Latino and highly undocumented Pico-Union neighborhood which, only via a unified voice, was able to petition members of the Los Angeles City Council for much needed urban renewal projects; second, the successes of the *Asociación de Vendedores Ambulantes* (Street Vendors Association) in protecting the rights of street vendors to conduct business in downtown Los Angeles; and third, the organizing successes of Justice for Janitors, a labor-union-based movement organizing predominantly Latino immigrant janitors. In the Toronto context, Siemiatycki and Isin (1997) detail the grassroots organizing efforts of "New Voices of the New City", a coalition of immigrant groups which formed in response to the proposed amalgamation of five Toronto-area megacities into a unified Greater Toronto Area. As the authors detail, this group had explicitly political objectives: "Increasing the participation of First Nations, visible minorities, immigrant groups, socially disadvantaged persons in the political process [was] the main aim of this project ..." (New Voices of the New City, as quoted by Siemiatycki and Isin, 1997, pp. 89–90). And Raymond Rocco (1999) discusses instances of community organizing in two marginalized Latino populations in Los Angeles, and frames his case studies in a discussion of "associational citizenship" and new spaces of civil society. He discusses a women's network which petitioned its local city council over health care issues; and also details the struggles of a group of parents who, when actively marginalized from their children's PTA due to their limited English proficiency, formed their own Spanish-speaking PTA in order to assert their rights as parents, despite the fact that they were noncitizens.

A number of geographers have approached the relationship of citizens to the city in a slightly different way: by exploring the ways in which a substantive and meaningful citizenship is constituted by political agents in local places (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003; Secor, 2003, 2004; Staeheli, 2003; Staeheli and Clarke, 2003). Without discounting nation-state citizenship, these scholars argue that "... the nation-state is not the only scale at which citizenship is constructed or is given meaning" (Staeheli, 2003, p. 99), but rather that struggles over belonging in real places are central to the daily practice of individuals as citizens. For example, conducting ethnographic fieldwork with the Turkish population of Duisburg-Marxloh, Germany, enables Patricia Ehrkamp and Helga Leitner (2003) to understand the ways in which local immigrant institutions and political activity regarding homeland politics both utilize the public spaces of the city and open critical innovative and institutional spaces which play an important role in the contestation and constitution of citizenship for this population, otherwise marginalized from formal citizenship. And Anna Secor (2003, 2004) interprets the citizenship and rights claims of rural Kurdish migrant women in Istanbul as a spatial strategy which "disrupts" hegemonic and disciplining strategies of citizenship through "the politics of everyday practices ..." (2004, p. 353), and serves to "create, police and challenge the boundary lines of this imagined urban community" (2003, p. 148).

The City, Citizenship, and Noncitizens: Empowerment or Marginalization?

It is vital, in this migratory era, to critique liberal democratic citizenship of the territorial nation-state for its failings and to propose alternative conceptions. And in different ways, each of the above approaches does this. The first, the cosmopolitan and transnational, reimagines citizenship as transcending the particularisms of the nation-state or inhabiting a space of flows between global cities within these states. The second envisions a bounded city, detached from the nation-state and possessing a reinvigorated citizenship of its own. And the third, the agency-centered approach, provides us with examples of marginalized populations reasserting themselves as valid members of the urban public. Each of these approaches offers us novel, compelling, and valuable blueprints to think about the ways in which citizenship is being challenged in the contemporary context, as well as its possible reconfigurations.

However, there is one issue with which these literatures do not, on the whole, engage directly: undocumented or “illegal” status. It is crucial to critique citizenship not only from the inside—as the majority of citizenship theorists are wont to do—but also to acknowledge the expanding population of undocumented residents within the territorial boundaries of the nation-state, and to acknowledge that the boundary between citizens and noncitizens has an impact on the meaning and practice of citizenship (Bosniak, 2000).

For instance, transnational and rescaling theorists tend to discount or dismiss the continued importance of formal citizenship for noncitizens’ livelihoods. In general, these literatures approach citizenship from two equally problematic stances when taken from the perspective of noncitizens, particularly undocumented or irregular migrants. First, they start from *within* the institution of citizenship, assuming that people are already citizens, and expand from there. In this sense, urban citizenship (such as the developing citizenship regime in the EU) is additive: protected by their status as nation-state citizens, it is possible to explore novel forms of political membership, which as a secondary or tertiary realm of political belonging, does not take away from one’s primary membership, but boosts one’s empowerment in novel ways.

Second, while a number of scholars may start with the assumption of noncitizen status or, at the very least, include this in their analyses, they then offer the outlines of normative citizenship regimes which do not, at least in the short to medium term, offer the same status as citizenship. Yasemin Soysal’s work is an excellent example of this problematic. In her otherwise compelling book, *The Limits of Citizenship* (1994), she makes an argument that we are entering a “postnational” era in which national citizenship is becoming less important, while universal and deterritorialized forms of membership, as exemplified by the newly emerging international human rights regime, have the potential to offer a novel framework for future rights and identity. Responding to her claims, however, T. Alexander Aleinikoff argues that international legal norms do not float freely, and that Soysal doesn’t acknowledge the continued power of the nation-state in constructing, legitimating, and enforcing these norms: “states will remain the primary locus of law—including international law, which will be enforced through national legal organs” (Aleinikoff, 2003, p. 122). Furthermore, while the human rights regime may hold sway in some aspects of EU governance, the region about which Soysal is writing, human rights norms have played “... a surprisingly small role in US discourse and jurisprudence” (Aleinikoff,

2003, p. 111). Instead, he argues, rights and protections for noncitizens, as opposed to being based on a supranational framework, have been a central element of American constitutionalism, and thus squarely located within the framework of the nation-state.

Additionally, Soysal does not extend her analysis to include undocumented migrants, but focuses on the rights of legally admitted guest workers. When viewed through the lens of undocumented migration, the emerging EU citizenship regime is less impressive. Yes, citizens of member states and some guest workers are able to partake of novel supra- and sub-national political memberships, but at the same time, as member states have sought to normalize immigration and refugee policy among themselves, "Fortress Europe" has emerged, in which undocumented migrants are even further marginalized from membership (Kofman, 2002).

In this respect, congruent processes are taking place in the US and Europe. In the US, until immigration and welfare reforms of 1996 and the events of 9/11 reversed momentum, the decades beginning in the 1960s were characterized by an increasingly expansive rights regime, in which the rights available to legal residents and citizens became increasingly congruent, with the exception of political rights such as voting, holding public office, and serving on juries (Jacobson, 1996; Schuck, 1998; DeLaet, 2000). At the same time, the barriers separating those legally present (permanent residents and guest workers) and unauthorized migrants have become higher and higher. In this regard, particularly since the US immigration reforms of 1996, which rolled back a number of rights previously afforded to legal residents, citizenship is becoming an increasingly privileged status, legal residence an increasingly tenuous status, and undocumented status is fast becoming the identity of a racialized, marginalized, poor work force.

With this legal and institutional marginalization increasing, entertaining urban citizenship as a possibility in the near to medium term must also be combined with an acknowledgment of the power of the nation-state and the continued importance of the status of "citizen" and (one step removed) "legal resident" as important—and not at all insignificant—in the life chances and opportunities of people. At the very least, *the legal right to remain* must not be considered insignificant. It makes sense to critique citizenship for those who have it, but for undocumented residents, pondering scales of citizenship beyond and below the nation-state can become an elite exercise.

This issue emerges frequently in the literature as citizenship, as a formal institution designating membership in the nation-state, is discounted and discredited, or considered:

... loosely "post-modern" in that there is no single modern rational legal state which delivers clear and unambiguous rights and duties to all its citizens constituted as a "nation of strangers" with a common national identity. (Urry, 2000, p. 54)

These critiques are quite useful in one regard, as it is true that (1) citizenship, not often thought of as such, is indeed an institution always in flux and (2) contemporary conditions are bringing to light more and more of the problems inherent in modern conceptions of citizenship. It is perfectly reasonable to critique contemporary citizenship as an institution in need of reworking. In that respect, reading the following excerpt with a citizen in mind makes sense. Engin Isin, a thoughtful scholar of historical and contemporary citizenship, writes:

Rather than merely focusing on citizenship as legal rights, there is now agreement that citizenship must also be defined as a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or losing rights. Being politically engaged means practising substantive citizenship, which in turn implies that members of a polity always struggle to shape its fate. This can be considered as the sociological definition of citizenship in that the emphasis is less on legal rules and more on norms, practices, meanings and identities. (Isin, 2000, p. 3)

It is important to move away from an idea of citizenship as merely legal rights, and to begin to conceptualize it as a social process which emphasizes "... norms, practices, meanings, and identities" (Isin, 2000, p. 3; see also Siemiatycki and Isin, 1997; Turner, 1997). In doing so, we can begin to see the places in which citizenship is fraying at the edges, and hence, the spaces of possibility for those marginalized from its protection. But is that the final goal of this critical process? The aspect of this problematic which is frequently skipped over is how reconceptualizing citizenship as process should eventually be tied back in with discounted structures of legal and formal citizenship. Or in other words, at least while citizenship is still a status and identity which has real power over people's lives, it is important that the processes of critiquing citizenship not *only* deconstruct it, but that the ways in which citizenship is being challenged at the margins also come back to influence the structure of the formal and legal institution. Yes, as Urry writes, citizenship is, in one respect, "... loosely postmodern ..." (2000, p. 54) but it is also, especially with reference to migrants and the ability to cross borders and stay within a nation-state, decidedly modern. For citizenship is certainly process, but it is still very much a status which has real influence over people's lives. Rereading Isin's passage with an undocumented person in mind brings to light the problem with much of the contemporary critique regarding citizenship. For instance, imagine saying to an "illegal immigrant" who is robbed on the way home from work but is scared to contact the police for fear of deportation that he should not be thinking of citizenship as "merely" a "legal right", but should rather be thinking of it as a "practice" or "identity". Additionally, Isin assumes that those who should be politically engaged in the process of shaping citizenship are "members of a polity", which undocumented migrants are not.

This is not to critique Isin and others unfairly. Indeed, it is only by thinking of citizenship as process that challenges to its contemporary configuration can be better entertained. I mean only to insert in these discussions a concern with the status of *undocumented migrants and residents*, who are, as the walls around the US and EU grow higher, further excluded from formal membership, and who cannot critique citizenship from the inside, but rather are decidedly outsiders to this institution.

From the perspective of noncitizens, then, supranational/transnational and rescaled conceptions of urban citizenship face a very potent challenge: namely, institutions of political membership below and beyond the nation-state are not yet potent enough (and may not be in the near to medium term) to provide adequate protection or alternative structures of belonging to those who are in a country in which they are living without authorization.

As an illustration, and following Bauböck's analysis mentioned above (2003b), let us speculate on the idea of a bounded urban citizenship for a moment, but add the question of migrant legal status to the speculation. First, let us assume that unlike the local citizenship regime in the EU, the body of urban citizens includes nation-state citizens, as well as both

legal and "illegal" residents. Until a time at which nation-state citizenship became less important and valuable than this emergent urban citizenship, the city would contain two classes of citizen: one which had nation-state citizenship and urban citizenship, and one which had only urban citizenship. This would create a body of second-class citizens, a status antithetical to the ideals of universality and liberalism, and in many ways reproduces, at a different scale, one of the primary problems associated with contemporary citizenship: the necessity for it to be bounded and to have insiders and outsiders. Only if this type of urban citizenship was a guaranteed stepping stone to full membership in the polity could one make an argument for a temporary urban citizenship status. But until having (or not having) the status of nation-state citizen (or at the very least, legal resident) has power over the lives of individuals, urban citizenship is perhaps a means of maintaining marginalization (albeit in a different form than "illegal" status) and a diversion from a project which could instead challenge the present exclusions inherent to nation-state citizenship.

If rescaled visions of urban citizenship are wanting with respect to migrant legal status, what sort of urban citizenship might effectively take migrant legal status into account? In formulating an (admittedly highly normative) vision, I follow Bankowski and Christodoulidis who turn conventional understandings of political community on their heads and argue against constituting a citizenry by:

... locating a pre-political constituency from which to draw the resources of citizenship but instead by politicising the question of constituency in a way that allows it to be contested and re-negotiated politically to create community, its constituency challenged and consolidated at the same time ... (1999, p. 101)

In this sense, I propose an ideal in which citizenship is no longer *bounded* (assuming an *a priori* political community), but is instead *grounded*. In other words, I argue for a citizenship in which full membership would not be dependent upon an *explicit* consent to enter and remain a bounded community, as is the case with contemporary citizenship in the liberal democratic welfare state, but instead upon the mere reality of *presence* and *residence* in a place. As an unbounded model of citizenship, there would be no necessary difference in status between insiders and outsiders, and in this sense, legal status would cease to be a defining characteristic.

A similar conception of urban citizenship has been entertained by Mark Purcell in a recent article (2003). While his primary concern is not undocumented migrants, he develops a model of urban citizenship which reaches beyond what he calls "liberal-democratic/Westphalian (LDW) citizenship" (p. 565) and radically restructures the way we think about membership. Central to Purcell's normative elaboration is the requirement that the city is able to break from its place in the nested hierarchy of the nation-state and begin to operate as an autonomous entity:

Inhabitation replaces national citizenship as the basis for membership, which unhinges the right to the city from the national scale, from the sovereignty of the nation-state, and from the nation as the primary political community. (p. 578)

With this condition met, Purcell draws upon French political and social theorist Henri Lefebvre's notion of *inhabitation*, or the idea that the "... right to the city is earned by

living in the city” (p. 577). In other words, conventional nation-state citizenship, which is based on formal membership in the national community, is replaced, with the Lefebvrian ideal of residence and lived presence in urban space as being the most important and central fact of urban membership. This creates the potential for “. . . a new politics in which inhabitation, not nationality, forms the basis for political community and decision-making authority” (p. 566).

While normative models such as these play an important role by providing vision and exploring the full range of possibilities, they are, quite clearly, not within easy grasp. Indeed, as legal geographer Don Mitchell has recently written, “. . . the growing literature on the relationship between urban space and forms of citizenship (for example, Isin, 2000) is not yet well grounded in the actual legal and social exigencies of city life, operating too often on the normative, idealist plain defined by the political philosophy discourse” (2005, p. 86; see also Skrbis *et al.*, 2004). Can we entertain an “urban citizenship” which does not assume the complete demise of the nation-state, but acknowledges the continued persistence and power of the nation-state and the very real daily challenges faced by undocumented residents? Is there a way to literally locate (elements of) “citizenship-as-inhabitation” in contemporary cities? How might we argue for a grounded citizenship which is not located on the “normative, idealist plain” (Mitchell, 2005, p. 86), but in real cities such as New York City, Los Angeles, and Austin, Texas?

A Fourth Approach: Local “Citizenship” Policies for Undocumented Residents

While undocumented migrants are “illegal” from the perspective of the US federal government, approximately 10 million undocumented persons are living in communities throughout the US (Passel, 2005), working, sending their children to school, attending church, buying groceries, and so forth. For people living in these communities, undocumented migrants are not abstract illegal constructs, but are neighbors, family members, customers, parents to schoolchildren, and in many other ways, regular participants in the life of their communities. In the absence of drastic shifts in federal immigration enforcement and policy, cities and states are left with the task of managing the daily realities of these growing undocumented populations. As a consequence, numerous states and localities are formulating (with varying degrees of success) local membership policies in response to the realities of the expanding presence of undocumented residents, which are in tension with the primacy of the federal government’s role in regulating borders, immigration, and citizenship policy.

These local policies can be distinguished by three characteristics. First, because the policies I discuss below are being developed as a positive response to the residence of undocumented persons in these communities, I argue that these policies represent a *de facto* consent for the formal membership of these individuals.⁷ While these residents have not received explicit consent from the nation-state to enter and remain within the US (and are therefore “illegal”), they *are* receiving explicit consent (or at the very least, implicit consent) to remain in the cities and states which are enacting these local policies. In effect, they are being (partially) recognized as local or sub-national citizens under *jus domicili* standards, which base membership upon residence. Second, these policies do not invoke international human rights or cosmopolitan ideals as their foundation. Instead, they are motivated by local and national conceptions of justice, as well as local or state

practicalities. As such, these policies are made possible primarily by the federal and multi-scalar structure of government in the US. Even though the federal government in the US has sole power over immigration matters (as immigration policy is considered an instrument of foreign policy), states and cities have some degree of leeway in developing their own membership policies which facilitate local state interaction with undocumented residents. And third, most importantly, in many of the agency-centered approaches detailed above, "citizenship" is necessarily considered more of a sociological process by which a particular marginalized group, excluded from formal membership, finds an alternate route to belonging. In contradistinction, these local policy initiatives engage more directly with legal status. Once passed, they bestow certain rights, are an element of local law, are applicable to all undocumented residents in the jurisdiction, are thus "universal" (at least the local scale), and therefore can be arguably described as local "citizenship" policies.

A small, but growing number of scholars are starting to conduct research in this fourth approach to migration, citizenship, and the city (Lahav, 1998; Rogers and Tillie, 2001; Johnston, 2003; Kemp and Raijman, 2004; Penninx *et al.*, 2004; Wells, 2004). The majority of this literature is emerging from the European context, perhaps as a result of the novel multi-scalar citizenship regime (including urban citizenship) recently instituted in the EU. Most prominently, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recently sponsored a multiyear study which explored the process and outcome of local government policy formation *vis-à-vis* immigrant and ethnic minority communities (Penninx *et al.*, 2004, p. 9; see also Rogers and Tillie, 2001). And in the US context, Miriam Wells (2004) details three examples of local policies enabled by the "multi-layered structure of the U.S. nation state" (p. 1308); for instance, the creation of "limited cooperation ordinances" in San Francisco, which took advantage of the "disjuncture between government levels" (p. 1318) to prohibit city employees from collecting information related to migrant legal status in exchange for service provision.

Below, I briefly introduce four additional emerging examples of local "citizenship" policy for undocumented residents in the US. While the latter two examples are not "urban" *per se*, I include them as they still demonstrate the generation of *sub-national* membership policy *vis-à-vis* undocumented residents. With the exception of local noncitizen voting, these policies have not yet received scholarly attention.

Local Noncitizen Voting

In 1996, Congress criminalized noncitizen voting in federal elections (Schuck, 1998, p. 187), however, individual states have always, throughout the history of the US, been vested with the authority to determine qualifications for both state-level citizenship and the ability to vote at the scale of the local and state, regardless of a person's federal citizenship status. In fact, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, 22 states encouraged and permitted noncitizen voting in local and state-wide elections and the practice has never been declared unconstitutional (Raskin, 1993; Keyssar, 2000).

Given the contemporary migratory context and the expanding population of long-term, noncitizen residents in many cities throughout the US, there is a growing movement to reestablish noncitizen voting in various localities. In Chicago, undocumented residents have been able to vote in local school board elections since 1988. Additionally, New York City permitted noncitizens to vote in school board elections from 1970 until 2003, when

school boards were dissolved by the current mayor. Since that time, however, a renewed movement to permit noncitizen voting in all local elections has emerged out of the efforts of a broad coalition of immigrant rights groups. In San Francisco, a measure to enable parents to vote in school board elections, regardless of their legal status, was narrowly defeated, 51% to 49%, in the November 2004 election, but efforts to legalize noncitizen voting in that city continue. A number of cities in Maryland have authorized noncitizen voting, most prominently the city of Takoma Park (a suburb of Washington, DC), where legal and undocumented residents have been able to vote in local elections since 1992 (Harper-Ho, 2000; Hayduk, 2004). Similar efforts are underway in Cambridge and Amherst, Massachusetts, as well as cities in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Texas (Immigrant Voting Project, 2005).

Matrículas Consulares

Matrículas consulares are identity cards issued by the Mexican government to its nationals living in the US. Consular IDs have been issued for nearly 120 years, but it has only been since 9/11 that various cities, agencies, and businesses in the US have started to accept the card in widespread fashion.

The first agency to accept the card as a valid form of identification was the Austin, Texas police department, which had become alarmed by the rising number of undocumented robbery victims in the city (Sheridan, 2002). As undocumented residents did not have valid identification and were not able to open bank accounts, many would return home from work carrying large quantities of cash and store it in their homes. And as potential thieves started to recognize this, the number of undocumented Mexican crime victims started to rise. In response, the Austin police department began accepting the *matrícula consular* as a valid form of identification, urged Mexican immigrant communities to report crimes if they should happen, and reassured these communities that they were not working in conjunction with the Immigration and Naturalization Service so undocumented residents would not fear deportation for contacting the police. Additionally, the police department convinced local Wells Fargo branches to accept the card to open bank accounts, and other national banks, such as Bank of America and Citibank have followed suit.

The Mexican government recently reported that 377 cities and 1,180 law enforcement agencies in the US accept the *matrícula consular* as a valid form of identification (Gonzalez, 2004). In addition to city, county, and state agencies (such as police departments and libraries), many businesses such as banks, video rental stores, and liquor stores also accept the card. The federal government does not have a unified or official position on the acceptance of consular ID cards, though President Bush and the Treasury Department have both come out publicly in support of them (Erler and Zentner, 2003).

While policies vary from locality to locality, without valid identification, there is a much greater chance that an undocumented resident stopped, for instance, by the police for a routine traffic violation will be arrested. Those arrested are then at greater risk of being flagged for deportation by federal immigration agents who monitor local jails. In preventing undocumented residents from being arrested, the *matrícula consular* acts as an important defense against deportation.

Driver Licenses for the Undocumented

Prior to the events of 9/11, most states issued driver licenses to undocumented residents. However, this issue became greatly politicized after 9/11, as 16 of the 19 hijackers had valid driver licenses or state identification issued in Virginia and Florida. With valid driver licenses, which in the US are the closest to a universally accepted form of identification, they were able to open bank accounts, rent apartments, and board airplanes. In response, a number of states have since tightened their requirements for obtaining a driver license (for instance, requiring a valid social security card), which has had the important secondary effect of making many undocumented residents ineligible.

While 9/11 was a watershed moment in the debate over driver licenses in many states, the issue had previously received political attention in California, where it has been a political football for over a decade. Until 1992, undocumented residents were able to apply for state-issued driver licenses, but in that year, a state law began requiring a valid social security number on driver license applications. An additional law passed in 1994 and court challenge in 1995 upheld these requirements. Starting in 1999, however, State Assemblyman (and later Senator) Gilbert Cedillo has floated a bill each year which would reinstate an undocumented person's ability to apply for a driver license, and in a last ditch effort to fight off a recall campaign by seeking the Latino vote, the bill was finally signed by Governor Gray Davis in 2003, but was then overturned by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2004. In response, Cedillo has brought a revised version of the bill to the California Assembly, and the debate continues. Similar political wrangling has happened in other states, most notably New York in the post 9/11 period.

While issuing driver licenses is still within state (not federal) jurisdiction, the recently passed REAL ID Act (2005) sets a precedent for federal involvement in driver licensing. Among other things, the controversial federal law specifies that states may only issue driver licenses with unique designs or colors to undocumented residents, indicating that they cannot be used as a valid form of identification. States have three years to comply with the REAL ID Act.

In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students

Many undocumented migrants arrive in the US with their parents, as infants and small children, and while technically "illegal", grow up attending public schools and knowing only the US as their home. As there has not been a legalization program since the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, this generation, sometimes called the "1.5 generation" (Portes, 1996), is now of or nearing college age. However, while they are as academically qualified as their native counterparts, they are not able to attend public universities because they do not qualify for in-state tuition and cannot apply for federal or state financial aid. While many of these students are *de facto* in-state residents (as they have attended and graduated from public schools), technically speaking, they are international students from the perspective of tuition.⁸ As more of these students reach college age, state university systems have been faced with the dilemma of how to handle the education needs of these students.

Due partially to a handful of well-publicized cases of undocumented high school honors students who are unable to attend college due to their legal status,⁹ this issue has over the past four years started to receive political attention in states throughout the US.

For instance, California, Illinois, New York, Utah, Washington, Oklahoma, and Texas have all passed state-wide legislation which enables undocumented students to receive in-state tuition. Even though federal legislation stipulates that states providing undocumented residents with in-state tuition must extend these benefits to all students in the US, states have developed strategies to circumvent this law, such as providing in-state tuition for all students who have attended a high school in the state for three or more years.

While this debate has played out primarily on the “local” (that is, state) scale, the issue has made its way to the US Congress, which has entertained (but not yet passed) bipartisan legislation called the DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors). The last version of the bill, introduced in 2003, sought to remove the federal requirement regarding in-state tuition for undocumented students, as well as to permit some undocumented students who have grown up in the US to apply for a “conditional lawful permanent resident” status (National Immigration Law Center, 2005).¹⁰

Conclusion

In addition to the normative, rescaling, and agency-centered approaches detailed above, this article suggests a fourth way to approach the problematic of citizenship and migration in the city, which, importantly, is centrally concerned with and takes seriously the question of undocumented status. In this migratory era, the four examples of “local citizenship” policy presented above powerfully demonstrate growing tensions in what it means to be a “member” of a political community. While undocumented residents have not been invited to join the hegemonic community of citizens (that of the nation-state), the situation is much different at local and state scales. Not only are they *de facto* residents of these sub-national communities, a variety of rights—to vote, to avoid deportation, to have a legally accepted identity, and to attend a public institution of higher education—are being written into local and state law. Citizenship, a formal political identity, is defined as a relationship of an individual to her nation-state, and as such, none of these local and state policies are “citizenship” policies, in the strict sense of the term. However, as facilitated by the multi-scalar structure of government in the US, these policies do represent a reconfiguration and stretching of legal boundaries around who is considered a valid member of the public.

While speculating on an unbounded, grounded citizenship is a highly normative practice, these four examples represent an important step toward this ideal, as I have presented it above. Namely, these sub-national policies determine membership via the mere fact of *presence* and *residence* in a city or state, in spite of the powerful boundaries still surrounding formal membership in the nation-state. Importantly, following Aleinikoff’s critique of Soysal (1994), these local “citizenship” policies are paradoxically made possible by the legal framework of the nation-state, as opposed to, for instance, being legitimated by the international human rights regime. And additionally, they are concrete examples of membership or “citizenship” policies at the local scale, and in this regard, begin to ground and locate theorizations floating on a “normative, idealist plain” (Mitchell, 2005, p. 86).

In the text above, I warned against urban citizenship as a project and status which diverts us away from the more important and immediate project of challenging the boundaries around what is still the hegemonic container of the citizenry: the nation-state. In this light, the examples I have briefly described above should not be celebrated as the end of the struggle, but rather, the initial successes of a much longer struggle. There is evidence that this broader struggle is receiving attention. The legalization of

undocumented residents was emerging as an issue immediately prior to the events of 9/11, and legislation for "Comprehensive Immigration Reform" (including an "earned legalization" provision) has recently been reintroduced by Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and John McCain (R-AZ) in the US Senate. A number of well-connected and high-ranking policy experts in Washington, DC recently noted that there is little chance of the current legislation passing, but a high likelihood that similar legislation will pass within the decade (Migration Policy Institute, 2005).

What is necessary in the meantime, therefore, is to continue to build upon growing critiques of nation-state citizenship, to formulate alternate models of belonging at multiple scales including the sub-national or urban, and to document empirical examples of "citizenships" which challenge the status quo. However, in creating these visions and exploring these case studies, it is vital that the needs of the most marginalized residents of these cities—those without citizenship and legal status—be incorporated into these emerging visions of formal membership and belonging.

Notes

- ¹ I interviewed this individual as part of my research on undocumented migrants and residents in Los Angeles who, somewhat paradoxically, have been participating in campaign politics and "get out the vote" drives run by their labor unions. For a thorough discussion and analysis of this field work, see Varsanyi (2005). Quotation translated from Spanish.
- ² The *Public Culture* issue has since been published as an edited volume (Holston, 1999a).
- ³ In Latin, this is the connection between *civis* and *civitas*, and in Greek, the connection between *politēs* and *polis* (Dagger, 2000). The contemporary English word, *citizenship*, originates in the Old French word *citeien*, from *citē*, or city, and in essence, *citizenship* could be thought of as *city-zenship*. This etymological and historical connection can be seen in other contemporary languages such as the city, the citizen, and citizenship in Spanish: *la ciudad*, *el ciudadano*, and *la ciudadanía*. And furthermore, the first entry for citizen given in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is not what one might imagine, in a world in which citizens are typically thought of in relation to their nation-state. The *OED* describes a citizen first and foremost as "an inhabitant of a city or (often) of a town; esp. one possessing civic rights and privileges, a burgess or freeman of a city". Only in the second entry does the connection with the nation-state come to the fore: "a member of a state, an enfranchised inhabitant of a country, as opposed to an alien" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, online version, s.v. "citizenship", available at <http://dictionary.oed.com>).
- ⁴ I thank an anonymous reviewer for this terminology.
- ⁵ For more on the developing citizenship regime of the European Union, see Martiniello (2000).
- ⁶ State structure in Germany complicates this novel EU citizenship regime somewhat. A number of German cities, Berlin, for instance, have been given effective status as territorial subunits of the federal government. With this arrangement, German citizens of Berlin have a particularly influential voice in German national politics, but members of non-German EU states living in Berlin are not able to access the Maastricht Treaty-designated rights of local/urban citizenship, as this would effectively constitute a breach of German national sovereignty. For more on this, see Bauböck (2003b, p. 148).
- ⁷ It should be noted that not all local policies are progressive, with regard to immigrant rights. California's state-wide Proposition 187, passed in 1994, and Arizona's Proposition 200, passed in 2004, were both designed to restrict undocumented resident access to publicly-funded social services.
- ⁸ While the 1982 Supreme Court case, *Plyler v. Doe*, upheld the right of undocumented students to primary and secondary public education, these students are not entitled to a public college or university education.
- ⁹ For an example, see the well-publicized case of Aurora, Colorado honors student and undocumented resident, Jesus Apodaca (Riley, 2002).
- ¹⁰ For a constitutional analysis of this issue, see Romero (2005, Chapter 5).

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