
BOOK REVIEW

Stack, T. & Luminiello, R. (Eds.) (2021). *Engaging Authority: Citizenship and Political Community*. Rowman & Littlefield

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Engaging Authority is part of the book series *Frontiers of the Political*. Edited by Trevor Stack and Rose Luminiello, it engages with concepts of political theory and offers a framework to reconceptualize our views on political community and citizenship at the same time. The book was put into print as quarantines were imposed around the world in 2020.

The book engages authority via two concepts: political community and citizenship. Authors with distinct disciplinary backgrounds introduce their case studies to help grasp the nuances of their relations with political authority. In doing so, the book provides an excellent opportunity to move beyond the regular discussion of democratic norms and offers an original agenda for reconceptualizing citizenship and political authority in more authoritarian settings. The editors designed a set of four questions to bring together the different views. However, they allowed the authors to tailor concepts to their own agendas: 'Who or what exercises political authority? What scope of authority and over whom? What relations exist between those subject to authority? What ideals of citizenship and political community are and can be held?'

By relying on these questions, I believe the editors were able to provide a framework within which the diverse multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research could take form and inform about many facets of political community and citizenship. Anthropology, education, political theory, legal scholarship, and philosophy are all covered in the book. However, I would argue that international relations could have added valuable insight to the wider discussion.

This variety of disciplines, however, provides a unique opportunity for the reader to experience many forms of citizenship and political community. On the one hand, the different approaches cover an extremely rich methodological palette, from philosophical conceptualization and theoretical exploration through interviews and focus group discussions to the analysis of speeches and state practices. On the other hand, with the help of these distinct approaches, myriad forms of citizenship and political community are defined.

While I believe that the book in its entirety contributes to the study of citizenship with a new approach, I see the distinct chapters as offering new methodological courses

that could also benefit citizenship studies. To elaborate on this view, I will start with a short review of how citizenship has been studied and how the book contributes to this.

Traditionally, citizenship studies from the 1990s deal with citizenship by relying on two main trajectories. One, that citizenship is a concept that informs about the domestic political order of a state; and two, it has been investigated by legal scholarship as legal status. Though this sounds like a simplification, these trajectories have indeed embodied the most important approaches taken by contemporary scholars. Rainer Bauböck, in 2010, gave an overview of how he sees citizenship studies in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (Bauböck, 2010). He argues that as a result of the impact of migration studies on citizenship, a ‘new comparative literature on “citizenship as nationality”’ has become apparent.

Bauböck discusses that, back in 2010, the study of citizenship moved toward a systematic comparative research approach. At the same time, he calls for studying the concept not merely from the point of view of laws and state policies but ‘rather as part of intertwined citizenship constellations.’ At this point, he moves on to build an argument that relies on the understanding of citizenship as a transnational phenomenon. Individuals do not respond to one but multiple simultaneously important political entities – one could say political authorities. Accordingly, we can say that the focus in citizenship research is on multiple citizenship and citizenship as overlapping membership in several communities.¹

The research agenda on citizenship is still being set for the upcoming years by data generated from the analysis of legislation. Bauböck, together with Jo Shaw and Marteen Vink, discuss how citizenship, relying on the research opportunities provided by the European Union Democracy Citizenship Observatory and its databases, can be researched (Vink et al., 2016). The Observatory offers a comprehensive database of modes of acquisition and loss of citizenship (EUDO Citizenship – Globalcit, n.d.). The availability of these data has enormously impacted how citizenship has been investigated in the last ten years. Accordingly, migration, international legal norms, transnationalism, and global diffusion mechanisms play a role in the study of citizenship.

These questions, dilemmas, and concepts are to be understood under the assumption that, according to mainstream theories in the literature at the time, citizenship policies will develop in accordance with democratic norms. Scholars of liberal convergence theory argued that the concept would apply to these democratic norms; some said it would do so under the label of cosmopolitan or global citizenship (Benhabib, 2007; Ben-Porath & Smith, 2013; Held, 2013; Soysal, 2011), while others approached it from the point of view of Western democracies and their norms (Joppke, 2010; Spiro, 2010).

Since then, we have recognized that liberal convergence theory no longer reflects reality. Illiberal shifts, populist leaders generally, and the developments of international politics (not to speak about the last couple of years’ developments in connection to the COVID-19 pandemic) contradict this view. The book *Engaging Authority* supports the idea

¹ Just a short and arbitrary list of literature that engages with transnationalism in the years before and after 2010: Bauböck (2003; 2007a; 2007b); Faist and Kivisto (2007); Owen (2013); Rubio-Marin (2006); Spiro (2011).

that concepts of political community and citizenship are no longer to be investigated within the realms of democracy. Actual case studies prove that notions of authority establish fluid realities of citizenship and political community.

In 2022, *Citizenship Studies* published a special issue discussing the last 25 years of the study of citizenship. A common agenda that may be realized while reading the articles is that they argue that citizenship is a politically generative concept. The editors (Leah Bassel and Engin Isin) point out that '[t]he study of citizenship, therefore needs to address whether it is inescapably an institution of domination for nationalism, racism, gender oppressions, and colonialism or it can serve as an institution of emancipation for cosmopolitan or planetary imaginaries' (Bassel & Isin, 2022, p. 363). Thus, this question reconnects us to liberal convergence theory.

I argue that the book *Engaging Authority* helps with deciding about these dilemmas of citizenship studies. I believe conceptualizing citizenship from the authorities' point of view is a fresh attempt to understand citizenship, the concept itself, and the role of citizenship studies.

The concept of citizenship in this book can be derived from how authority is viewed, or, more precisely, from how the relations of authority can be viewed. As introduced in Chapter 1 by Trevor Stack, citizens are, first, subjects on whom demands are made, and second, those from whom demands are made. In the book, citizens interact with each other, and their relations with each other and toward authority ultimately impact the political community's appearance.

The chapters and case studies introduce the reader to different contexts of citizenship. The book contains eleven chapters, from which (below) I only elaborate on those that contribute to a new conceptualization of citizenship.

In the case of India (Chapter 2), Gurpreet Mahajan investigates how the idea of the political community as a unified one can be created and nurtured. Within these unified communities, mere theories of citizenship are not enough to answer the question: 'Why would self-interest pursuing individuals make sacrifices for each other?' Citizens are invoked in relation to each other. The chapter argues that individuals pursue their own goals and have a sense of public duty and responsibility to each other; hence, they can see themselves as a political community.

In the Hungarian context (Chapter 3), Balázs Majtényi introduces Hungarian extra-territorial citizenship with a particular focus on the exclusive character of the Hungarian Constitution. It is demonstrated that despite being citizens of the same political entity, transborder citizens are incorporated into the Hungarian political community, but national minorities are rather excluded from it.

In another chapter (Chapter 5), school students are interviewed, and several dozen focus group discussions are conducted in relation to the 2014 Referendum on Scottish Independence, by which 16- and 17-year-olds were first enfranchised. In conducting the research, the authors Nadia Kiwan, Rachel Shanks, and Trevor Stack not only shed light on how the political community is reproduced in schools but also explore the dynamics of citizenship in these unique but crucial sites of authority. They conclude that school students' views on citizenship do not necessarily apply to norms of democracy; authoritarian forms of rule (that might anyway be present in schools) strongly impact their views. Fur-

thermore, they would rather see their obligations in horizontal terms than in vertical solidarity. This strongly contradicts the experiences in the next chapter, which I want to cover.

With the introduction of the Kurdish case (Chapter 6), Hanifi Baris discusses the idea of democratic confederalism. The Kurdish model is established using the four components of sovereignty, representative democracy, disputes over borders, and the concept of exclusive citizenship. In accordance with this idea of citizenship, citizens have a direct impact; they are directly involved in local councils and assemblies in political decision-making mechanisms. Here, instead of citizens' obligations, solidarity is emphasized. Instead of the authority of state institutions, a relatively horizontal commitment to fellow citizens is apparent; instead of cultural affinity, residency matters.

In another chapter (Chapter 9), Trevor Stack discusses the political community from the citizen upwards. He conducted interviews in Mexico and California, asking the question that students of citizenship studies rarely dare to ask: 'What does it mean to you to be a citizen?' Citizenship for people in Mexico and California had much to do with political authority, but the context differed enormously. National citizenship proved to be less exclusive in Mexico than in California, but in Mexico, citizenship meant something connected to living in society. This also informs the reader about the diverse nature of the nexus associated with political authority.

Ionut Untea introduces competing models of the Islamic political community in a chapter (Chapter 10) where the need to discuss the concepts applicable outside democratic settings most prominently arises. Here, citizenship is conceptualized differently from the Western ideas of the nation-state. Within ISIS's religious framework, voluntary submission would become a core aspect of membership and participation in a political community.

In a concluding chapter (Chapter 11), Trevor Stack, one of the editors, summarizes the book's agenda and proposes to 'understand "the citizen" as a particular and complex figure of authority relations, as well as a diverse one, entailing sundry versions of being invoked or involved in the governing. Citizens are invoked as referents, and social actors may invoke themselves as citizens. Invoking and being invoked can serve to justify authority; authorities may involve them, or they may involve themselves, in the exercise of authority' (p. 225).

Thus, we can see from this short list of assorted chapters that citizenship, the concept, may not only be understood in terms of democratic notions but also as a reflection of migration or globalization. Citizenship becomes in the book a more complex play of authority relations. By offering this view, I argue that the book represents a new attempt at conceptualizing citizenship and understanding its nuances. Due to its inter- and multidisciplinary nature, the book can contribute to a fruitful discussion on the concepts that citizenship studies have handled rigorously.

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