

*Citizenship: Discourse, Theory, and
Transnational Prospects* by Peter Kivisto
and Thomas Faist

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176pp.

Carin Runciman (University of Glasgow)

Since the end of the cold war there has been a proliferation of academic literature upon the topic of citizenship leading Peter Kivisto and Thomas Faist to question whether we are living through “an age of citizenship (Cardoso cited on p.1).” The aim of this book is to bring together and synthesise the various competing discourses on citizenship which they argue often speak past one another. The text covers a vast range of Western countries including the UK, US, Canada and Australia. However, in concentrating on an analysis of Western states the extent to which citizenship discourses are applicable out with this context is left unexamined and calls into question the extent to which citizenship can be regarded as a global transnational discourse. Nonetheless the scope and depth of the literature which Kivisto and Faist present is admirable. The text is organised around four themes: inclusion, erosion, withdrawal and expansion which seeks to encapsulate and harmonise the dominant trends in sociological writings on citizenship. This book forms part of Blackwell’s Key Themes in Sociology series and as such serves as an introductory text to the field.

Crucial in informing the selection of material presented in this review of citizenship is the definition employed by the authors themselves. They define citizenship as membership to a defined territorial nation state in which citizens have rights and obligations to the state. This theoretical and institutional definition neglects an

analysis of citizenship at the level of lived reality. This is unfortunate, as such an understanding can serve to illuminate the ways in which citizenship regimes are not just passively accepted but actively experienced, constructed and contested.

It is only within the first chapter, *Inclusion*, that strong links are made between the construction of citizenship regimes and human agency. Within this chapter the authors provide a detailed but concise historical summary of how citizenship rights, in the form of political rights, have gradually been expanded across class, gender and racial lines. With a primary focus upon the UK and US they demonstrate that citizenship regimes, as we currently experience them, are the result of a variety of social and political struggles.

The theme of inclusion is continued through a critical analysis of the links between the ways in which different states construct multiculturalism and the impact this has upon inclusive notions of citizenship. Kivisto and Faist detail how debates on multiculturalism are influenced by differing historical, social and material factors affecting how multiculturalism and citizenship are constructed in differing ways in the political arenas of the UK, US, Canada and Australia. Given that this is an introductory text, the authors handle this wealth of material skilfully and effectively signpost for the reader areas for further discussion.

The second thematic chapter, *Erosion*, focuses upon T.H. Marshall's contribution to the study of citizenship and in particular his conception of social citizenship. Writing in the 1950s Marshall conceived of citizenship as a layered concept divided into three spheres: the civil, political and social. For Marshall social citizenship was based upon the right to access welfare and its ability to temper the worst excesses of the capitalist economy. However, since Marshall's time the nature and role of the welfare state has been

called into question. Kivisto and Faist present a critique of Marshall and the role of the welfare state from both the political Left and Right before moving on to consider the impact of neoliberalism on the social citizenship envisioned by Marshall. The authors present an insightful and refreshingly balanced account of their subject matter providing an excellent basis for further study.

While one can take issue with a number of theoretical perspectives presented within the first two chapters of this text, Kivisto and Faist present a detailed and succinct introduction to a number of contemporary debates and themes. However, the final two chapters present more of a challenge to the reader.

The third chapter, themed *Withdrawal*, is a response to Marshall's argument that in normal times a passive citizenry should be expected. Democratic theorists find this so-called withdrawal from public life problematic. The chapter is entirely focused upon the work of Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swindler and Tipton in *Habits of the Heart* (1985) and Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone* (2000) who argue that there has been a withdrawal from public and civic life in the US as society becomes increasingly fragmented and highly individualised. In drawing upon the work of these authors Kivisto and Faist are necessarily drawn into a Durkheimian logic whereby citizenship provides the grounds for social cohesion and regulation. However, the authors fail to map clearly how the themes covered by Bellah *et al* and Putnam relate to the previous chapters and the broader themes of the book. Furthermore, I would question the extent to which Bellah *et al* and Putnam would consider their work as concerned with citizenship rather than the role of civil society structures in a democratic polity.

The final chapter, *Expansion*, considers the significance of dual citizenship and so-called nested citizenship in transcending the

boundaries of single nation states. Within this chapter the authors provide a historical analysis of the ways in which states have guarded against the granting of dual citizenship as it was seen as a division of loyalty to the nation state. With the advent of globalisation, continuing global migration and a decline in the significance of notions of loyalty to the nation state the numbers of those who hold dual citizenship has increased dramatically. This chapter also considers arguments of transnational citizenship primarily considering the nested citizenship provided by the European Union. Whilst these are important trends to document I would argue that the significance of these changes can only be measured at the level of lived experience which this book fails to take account of.

Theoretical debates apart, the ultimate weakness of this volume is the disjointed manner in which the four themes are presented. Whilst each chapter stands alone credibly they fail to communicate with one another. Even within the conclusion little account is given as to how the various themes and trends covered often work in tandem or in opposition. Thus, the authors contribute to the ways in which the various discourses speak past one another. Furthermore, given that this is an introductory text the omission of any sustained analysis of commentators such as Bryan Turner and Ruth Lister undermine Kivisto and Faist's ability to provide a sociological introductory analysis of citizenship.

References:

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