

# BEYOND A CONSTRUCTION SITE, BEYOND NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP: THE INFRAPOLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP

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## ABSTRACT

### **Beyond a Construction Site, Beyond National Citizenship: The Infrapolitics of Translocal Citizenship**

Since the nation-state ceases to exist as the only centre of sovereignty and arena where key political decisions are made, efforts to envisage new forms of citizenship are separating political membership from the nation and constitute it according to entirely new criteria. The article examines the new concept of translocal citizenship that moves away from the nation-state as its territorial reference point, and simultaneously rejects its continuation within some new supranational entity. In the second part, the article reflects on the *Beyond a Construction Site* project, initiated by the Obrat Culture and Art Association (KUD Obrat), where an unused construction site has been employed as a community garden. The project illustrates translocal citizenship in practice, since the garden is fostering new forms of collective action and new forms of political membership which are better suited to intercultural dialogue and inclusion of migrant communities than are nation-states.

KEY WORDS: citizenship, migration, democracy, urbanism, community gardens

## IZVLEČEK

### **Onkraj gradbišča, onkraj nacionalnega državljanstva: Infrapolitika državljanstva**

Danes, ko nacionalna država ni več edini center suverenosti in prostor sprejemanja ključnih odločitev, poskusi zamišljanja novih oblik državljanstva politično članstvo čedalje bolj ločujejo od države in ga konstituirajo po novih kriterijih. Članek obravnava koncept translokalnega državljanstva, ki se oddaljuje od nacionalne države kot glavne referenčne točke, in ki hkrati zavrača njegovo oblikovanje v okviru novih nadnacionalnih entitet. V drugem delu članek reflektira projekt Onkraj gradbišča, s katerim je KUD Obrat opuščen gradbišče spremenil v skupnostni vrt. Projekt prikazuje translokalno državljanstvo v praksi, saj je vrt rezultiral v novih oblikah kolektivne akcije in novih oblikah političnega članstva, ki so bolj primerne za medkulturni dialog in vključevanje migrantskih skupnosti kot pa nacionalne države.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: državljanstvo, migracije, demokracija, urbanizem, skupnostni vrtovi

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## INTRODUCTION

"Private faces in public places  
Are wiser and nicer  
Than public faces in private places."  
– W. H. Auden, *Marginalia*

In recent years there has been a growing interest in new conceptions and practices of citizenship that transcend the nation-state. Attempts to imagine a new citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century soon revealed that this is not only a political question but rather an epistemological one, since exclusion, oppression and discrimination have not only economic, social and political dimensions but also cultural and epistemological ones (cf. Vodovnik 2011; Santos, Nunes and Meneses 2008: xix). As opposed to past practices, political control and domination are today not grounded solely on economic and political power, but foremost on knowledge or the hierarchization of knowledge. When imagining a new citizenship, conceptual clarity and theoretical thoroughness are thus insufficient since this task demands a wider epistemological or cognitive transformation.

Such transformation is especially necessary in societies where the leveling of political membership to national or even ethnical identity results from a linguistic or semantic similarity between both concepts. We often forget that at the very beginning, citizenship was not related to the state but solely meant a specific "urban relationship" between rights and duties in the city (Delanty 2006: 12).<sup>1</sup> *Citizenship* therefore meant political membership in a *city* and existed independently of the state. It is thus erroneous to talk only about a "citizen of the state" since we can also identify other types of citizenship that are built on different – e.g. territorial or functional – criteria.

In the article we start from the position that a new citizenship is already put in practice on the margins of the political map, where various "subterranean" collectives and movements are developing a genuinely new political alternative, and with it also a new understanding of political membership that is worked out on a more manageable scale, *ergo* within local communities. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007: xv) argues that we can find many important innovations – on both the political and theoretical level – within a network of local initiatives (urban or rural) that have gradually developed ties of mutual recognition and interaction. For Santos, this network represents the beginning of a translocal yet truly global network of direct democracy that, in its fight against social exclusion and the "trivialization of citizenship", recuperated an idea of alter-globalization, direct democracy and subaltern cosmopolitanism. A new citizenship, we shall call it translocal citizenship, is thus constituted beyond the nation-state, sometimes in opposition to it, but always transcends the parochial forms of political community that make global connectedness impossible.

In this article we will argue that it is necessary to rescue citizenship from the narrow statist confines that reduce citizenship to a legal status. Intrinsic to this aim will be an attempt to briefly reflect on the main contours of translocal citizenship. We will not offer a modest modification of the traditional conception of citizenship as a special relationship between the state and citizen whose contents are certain rights and duties, but will instead offer a new understanding of citizenship within translocal polities, where the mechanical link between rights and duties is finally loosened, as is the relationship between equality and difference.

Next, we will show how translocal citizenship is not a political membership in the narrow meaning of the word, but is rather offering us a broader and deeper understanding of democracy. Translocal citizenship, however, does not represent the depoliticization of political membership but rather a substantive understanding of the concept that in past decades has been reduced to a legal status without

1 The etymological origin of the word citizenship – from *civitas*, *civitatus*, to the modern *citoyen* – always linked political membership to smaller and more fluid polities.

substance (Pikalo and Trdina 2009). Translocal citizenship, in this respect, closely resembles the idea of “infrapolitics”, that according to James C. Scott (1990: 184) “provides much of the cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action on which our attention has generally been focused”. The infrapolitics of the seemingly non-political is as much a product of political necessity as of political choice and we should therefore understand infrapolitics not only as a form of political resistance in circumstances of tyranny, but also as “the silent partner of a loud form of public resistance” within modern democracies.

In the last part, the article will offer a case study of a project initiated by the Obrat Culture and Art Association (KUD Obrat), *Beyond a Construction Site*, that illustrates translocal citizenship in practice. The project reclaimed an unused, rubble-strewn construction site in the middle of residential neighbourhood in the centre of Ljubljana and transformed it into a community space intended for a community garden. The goal of the collective was not only the transformation of a degraded urban area into a garden, but rather a different kind of socializing, building a real community with a vibrant democracy from below. We should therefore understand the *Beyond a Construction Site* project as a political laboratory “not only about urban gardening and ecology, but also about sharing the management of a space and its processual and participatory organization” (KUD Obrat 2011). A “people’s garden” represents a microcosm of a different polity, where new citizen(ship) successfully challenges, *inter alia*, private property and atomization of domestic arrangements.

The case study will highlight the performative power of translocal citizenship with a new constellation of its basic tenets, whereby an explication of the original intent and meaning of citizenship represents one of its major characteristics. In times of intensified migration flows, migration and unprecedented mobility of the *demos*, this idea and practice of translocalism can indeed be understood as a much needed *panacea* for the shortcomings of national citizenship. The project shows how a migration on a local scale offers an exodus to a new polity and also to a new political membership. On the other hand, the project shows how a local project on a micro level can indeed be understood as a much better form for inclusion and empowerment of migrant communities than nation-states (cf. Toplak et al. 2010).

## TRANSLOCAL CITIZENSHIP?

Gerard Delanty (2007: 25) maintains that in a global age political, social and economic transformations “have brought in their wake responsibilities that go far beyond duties to the state”. Ksenija Vidmar Horvat (2010: 205), on the other hand, ascertains that national citizenship no longer represents the only form of political membership, because with accelerating trend of multiculturalization and denationalization of society it is obvious that national citizenship can’t accommodate demands for proper civic participation and democratic control. For Vidmar Horvat (2011: 10), the tension between a “territorially defined nation-state on the one hand and deterritorialized rights on the other” is only an additional reason for imagining a new model of political membership that exists independently of the nation-state.

We should emphasize, however, that a “new” citizenship beyond the nation-state should not be understood as a total break from all previous conceptions of citizenship, but rather as an explication of its original intent and meaning. Political membership beyond the state is, according to James C. Scott (2009: 3–4), rather the regularity of history, despite the inscription of the nation-state on the political map and consequently the sedentarization or administrative, economic and cultural standardization of fluid political entities. In addition, Harold Barclay (1996: 12) argues that political membership beyond the state is by no means unusual, since the non-statist polity “is a perfectly common form of polity or political organization. Not only is it common, but it is probably the oldest type (...) and one which has characterized most of human history.”

Nowadays, the nation-state is ceasing to exist as the only centre of sovereignty and arena where key political decisions are made. At the same time, the altered local – regional – global nexus makes it

possible to finally separate political membership from the nation and its constitution according to entirely new criteria. It should not surprise us that the new concept of translocal citizenship moves away from the nation-state as its territorial reference point, and simultaneously rejects its continuation within some new supranational entities. We could argue that it rejects the very notion of permanence and continuity and therefore builds on municipalized political praxes.

The concept of translocal citizenship represents a significant departure from classical theories of citizenship because it builds on *inclusion* and *participation* rather than on *identity* and, instead of *equality*, it accentuates *differences*, or “equal differences”. Yet translocal citizenship should also not be understood as another postmodern conception of political membership characterized by relativism and particularism that, according to Rizman (2008: 37), only detects diversity, difference, fragmentation, conflict and opposition, but not also commonality, equality, integration, consensus and integration. Referring to Darren O’Byrne (2003: 227), it “embraces plurality without being relativistic, universality without being deterministic, and identity without being unduly subjectivistic”. Translocal citizenship thus represents a critique of the universalistic assumptions within the liberal tradition, or their upgrade with differentiated universalism that draws close to Habermas’ idea of “constitutional patriotism”.<sup>2</sup> It does not equate democracy with a particular constitutional system only, nor with a particular constellation of centres of power within a society, but instead understands democracy in Westian terms – as a verb, and never as a noun (cf. West 2005: 68).

Translocal citizenship can also be understood as a performative citizenship that goes beyond citizenship as a normative disposition, since it is grounded in an actual political practice (cf. Slaughter and Hudson 2007: 9). We can agree with Ruth Lister (1998a) when she writes that to avoid a partial integration of a new political subject into the polity – and therefore rising numbers of *denizens* or *margizens* – we should once again understand citizenship not only as a legal status (citizenship-as-status) but also as a practice (citizenship-as-activity).

## THE CONTOURS OF TRANSLOCAL CITIZENSHIP

According to Gerard Delanty (2000: xiii), a reconfiguration of the relationship between equality and difference will be one of the most important aspects of a new citizenship. Citizenship is nowadays perhaps the most important point of contestation about the identity and recognition of (group) differences that cannot be resolved by the current model of multiculturalism, or can rather only be resolved in times of economic growth. On the other hand, the paradigm of universalism only results in the homogenization and uniformity of polities, but not also in social justice and the inclusion of their members. If the affirmation of equality and universalism does not mean necessarily emancipation, since it can result in a loss of identity, and affirmation of differences and relativism can, conversely, result in another anomaly, in the justification of discrimination and subjugation, the question that we should be asking is: Is there any solution to the so-called “politics of difference”?

In overcoming the errors and limitations of universalism along with relativism, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2008: 28) identifies the meta-right of *equal difference*. The equal difference upgrades the idea of *differentiated citizenship* (Young 1989) and *differentiated universalism* (Lister 1998b), since it is based on two axioms that transcend the old relationship of equality *versus* difference in a genuinely new relationship of equality *et* difference: first, it stresses difference when equality would threaten our identity and, second, it stresses equality whenever diversity would result in inferiority and discrimination. The

2 Considering that translocal citizenship offers a different understanding of political community and stresses its constant reinvention, we should instead conclude that translocal citizenship represents a form of “unconstitutional patriotism” that in its replacement of *ethnos* with *demos* follows a significantly more radical definition of democracy than Habermas.

differences that would remain when inequalities and hierarchy vanish thus become a powerful denunciation of the differences that the status quo reclaims in order not to disappear.

Yet the reconfiguration of equality and difference is not the only key characteristic of translocal citizenship. Another important novelty is a loosening of the mechanical link between rights and duties or, rather, the constitution of citizenship beyond this link. Within different theories of citizenship we find various understandings of the link between rights and duties – e.g. the preponderance of duties within the republican tradition and the preponderance of rights within the liberal one – but it is always established and perceived entirely mechanically. Citizenship as a special status is thus impossible without a burden of corresponding duties. Although such a definition of citizenship may seem logical and reasonable, it is highly problematic in many aspects. Since citizenship and citizenship rights are allocated only to subjects able to accept corresponding duties, a national citizenship is not open to subjects who are unable to be bearers of duties. This logic of reciprocity ensures, *inter alia*, that children, future generations, or nature cannot become full members of a community. Identifying an individual as a subject with rights and duties furthermore prevents the identification of group rights and group identity, and results in the exclusion of all indigenous communities that do not want to enter into a polity without their particular group identities.

We can agree with Ruth Lister (1998a) when she writes that to avoid a partial integration of a new political subject into the polity – and therefore rising numbers of *denizens* or *margizens* – we should once again understand citizenship not only as a legal status but also as a practice. We should add that it is not enough to understand new, performative citizenship as a practice *per se*, but as a *praxis* or a philosophical category of practice. Praxis differs considerably from the epistemological category of practice, which can, however, mean an activity that remains entirely alienated. Although the word *praxis* is commonly used in everyday language and appears relatively clear and understandable, since it is primarily used as a synonym for activity, creation, work, habit, experience, training etc., its meaning within philosophy, especially praxis-philosophy, is considerably more profound and specific. *Praxis* is equated only with free, universal and creative activity through which man creates and transforms his world and consequently himself. The key characteristic of *praxis* as a normative concept therefore lies in the fact that this activity represents a goal and purpose in itself. *Per analogiam* with Gajo Petrović's definition of praxis (1978: 64), performative citizenship or citizenship understood as praxis "is the most developed form of creativity and the most authentic form of freedom, a field of open possibilities and the realm of the truly new. It is the very 'essence' of Being, the Being in its essence".

## THE INFRAPOLITICS OF (TRANSLOCAL) CITIZENSHIP

Translocal citizenship closely resembles the idea of "infrapolitics" which, according to James C. Scott (1990: 184), "provides much of the cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action on which our attention has generally been focused". Translocal citizenship is not constituted in relation to the nation-state and is not practiced thorough the institutionalized channels of political action, but it rather extends the sphere of political action to include health, ecology, urbanism, food production, culture, sustainable development, sports, architecture etc. When Howard Zinn (2002: 25) explains that democracy is "not just a counting up of votes; it is counting up of actions", he argues that we should imagine democracy and new citizenship in much broader terms whereby the performative dimension proves to be crucial, especially if we understand democracy outside of the political sphere (an achievement of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) so that it also includes a social and economic dimension.

According to Scott, the infrapolitics of the seemingly non-political on the micro level is thus recognized as the crucial precondition of democracy on the social level. Infrapolitics is as much a product of political necessity as of political choice, and we should therefore understand infrapolitics not only as a form of political resistance in circumstances of tyranny, but also as "the silent partner of a loud form of public

resistance" within modern democracies. True, the infrapolitics of the seemingly non-political is not part of the mainstream, and many times it is hard to detect this "immense political terrain that lies between quiescence and revolt", but it is still real politics and "in many respects conducted in more earnest, for higher stakes, and against greater odds than political life in liberal democracies" (ibid., 200). The political struggles of the *Sans-Papiers* in France, the Erased in Slovenia, the "illegal" immigrants in the United States, the participants in the *Beyond a Construction Site* (as we will see below) etc. further demonstrate this.

These forms of struggle are, nevertheless, still marginalized and trivialized – from the political Right and Left advocating *real* political action meaning action *via* political parties – as: (a) unorganized, unsystematic, and individual; (b) opportunistic and self-indulgent; (c) with no revolutionary potential/consequences; and/or (d) implying accommodation with the system of domination (Scott 1985: 292). It is true that in case of "the unwritten history of resistance", the prosaic but constant or even Brechtian forms of struggle often merely result in marginal gains that ease the forms of their exploitation. It is also true that instead of targeting the main source of exploitation or the immediate source of exploitation, everyday forms of resistance, as Scott also chooses to call them, rather follow the line of least resistance.

Although we should never overly romanticize the "weapons of the weak", conversely, these forms of infrapolitical actions – e.g., passive noncompliance, evasion, desertion, deception, foot-dragging, pilfering – are also not trivial. Needless to say, the advantage of such resistance is that it results in concrete and immediate advantages. As Scott observes, even failed petty acts of resistance may achieve some gains: "/A/ few concessions from the state or landlords, a brief respite from new and painful relations of production and, not least, a memory of resistance and courage that may lie in wait for the future" (ibid., 29). Moreover, when multiplied by thousands and millions of people, such individual acts of quiet resistance "may in the end make an utter shambles of policies dreamed up by their would-be superiors" (ibid., 36).

It is ironic that in times of "fluid modernity" (Bauman), infrapolitical action that in the past characterized peasant resistance in settings where open political activity was restricted is once again becoming the most convenient form of struggle for "social movements with no formal organization, no formal leaders, no manifestoes, no dues, no name, and no banner" (ibid., 35). This is exactly what KUD Obrat attempts to do with the *Beyond the Construction Site* project, where an unused, rubble-strewn construction site has been employed as a "temporary experimental community".

## BEYOND A CONSTRUCTION SITE

Translocal citizenship closely resonates Hakim Bey's popular conceptualization of the spontaneous and subversive tactics of Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZ), that is, according to Bey, "an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates a part (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, *before* the State can crush it" (Bey 2003: 99). The greatest strength of the TAZ is "its invisibility – the State cannot recognize it because History has no definition of it. As soon as the TAZ is named (represented, mediated), it must vanish, it will vanish, leaving behind it an empty husk, only to spring up again somewhere else, once again invisible because undefinable in terms of the Spectacle". (ibid.)

In times when the political map has been completely inscribed with the nation-state – Bey talks about the "closure of the map" – the TAZ is offering new perception and conception of political change. The TAZ is a subversive tactic corresponding to "an era in which the State is omnipresent and all-powerful and yet simultaneously riddled with cracks and vacancies":

Ours is the first century without *terra incognita*, without a frontier. Nationality is the highest principle of world governance – not one speck of rock in the South Seas can be left open, not one remote valley, not even the Moon and planets. (...) Not one square inch of Earth goes unpoliced or untaxed in theory. (ibid.)

According to Jeffs' (1997: 368–369) elaboration of Bey's theory of TAZ, the political change should be "deterritorialized, decentralized, and delinearized on all political, economic, social, libidinal, and, last but not least, narrative levels, and small and nomadic forms of resistance introduced, also because there is not a single place in the world which has not been delineated by the nation state. /.../ [the TAZ] is invisible to the state and flexible enough to vanish, when determined, defined, and fixated." Such emancipation does not have to postpone its mission for fulfilment of the necessary precondition – the maturity of objective historic circumstances, or the formation of some coherent subject or class – since it builds on the supposition that every individual is capable of co-creating the world with their, even if very small, gestures (cf. Jeffs 1998: 22–23). This premise was also the basis on which a community-based garden intervention was started in a degraded urban space in Ljubljana by KUD Obrat, where unused land covered with waste and rubbish has been transformed into a community garden.

In collaboration with the neighbourhood community, KUD Obrat revived a long-fenced-off plot of land near Resljeva Street in Ljubljana and transformed it into a community space intended for a community garden. Although the original goal of the project was "to examine and show the potential of degraded urban areas and the possibility of their receiving new value through temporary use and community-based interventions" (KUD Obrat 2011), the project soon revealed new dimensions – reclaiming the commons and inventing new modes of political membership.

According to the members of KUD Obrat, the project started "i/n August 2010 (...) as part of a programme by the Bunker organization, *Garden By the Way*. The programme presented a series of events within the Tabor neighbourhood with the intention of making people more aware of the green parts of the city, encouraging urban gardening, and providing support for social urban spaces" (ibid.). Even more, the rehabilitation of a construction site in the middle of a residential neighbourhood – "a symptom of real estate speculations and capitalist production of space, which follows the maxim of growth and profit" – was an ideal place for a project that puts in the forefront "a need for a different revitalization of cities and where a space is a constitutive dimension of social action" (ibid.). The goal of the collective was not a modest transformation of a degraded urban area into a community garden, not only an independent production of healthy food and increasing food self-sufficiency, but rather a different kind of socializing, building a real community with a vibrant democracy from below: "Just as gardening is an activity, community is also an activity – a process and an effort to establish relationships and linkages – not only among the participants in *Beyond a Construction Site*, but also *beyond* that the project" (ibid.).<sup>3</sup>

After opening the site in the second half of August 2010 the group faced the question of whether or not a plan for organizing the space was needed. Although the collective experimented with a détournement of traditional spatial planning (e.g. Polonca Lovšin's action *A Day with a Goat*), they still decided to have a planning process based solely on active engagement of the public.<sup>4</sup> At the beginning the project attracted only a few people taking part in the clean-up and organization of the site, but the invitation to "Make Your Own Garden" drew a wide array of participants "enthusiastically setting up their vegetable beds", further confirming the rich local tradition of small-plot gardening. Although the project was organized on the principles of horizontalism and direct democracy, the KUD Obrat collective, as the initiator of the project, defined at the very beginning three basic rules for the use and management of the site:

3 Beyond a Construction Site has a daily "office-hours", where the participants introduce and explain the project to visitors or passers-by and a "need for green space, for gardens, and for a place to socialize".

4 In a reflection of the project, KUD Obrat writes that "Polonca Lovšin's art action *A Day with a Goat* put a symbolic question mark over traditional spatial planning. She spent a day on the abandoned construction site with Hana the goat and charted her movements around the overgrown terrain. On the basis of her notes about the goat's movements, she drew up a plan for organizing the plot. In contrast to the rationalistic approach of the rectangular grid, Lovšin's plan was guided by Hana's search for food and her investigation of her surroundings. We never, in fact, applied this plan to the space." See KUD Obrat (2011).

- everyone should construct her/his own allotment and, if they were unable to do this, would receive help from other participants;
- the use of garden chemicals is forbidden;
- everyone should manage her/his own allotment, and take part in the care for the commons.

What is of utmost importance for our imagining of a new citizen(ship) is a different understanding of community that developed throughout the project – community should not be based on the vague notion of identity (no matter how inclusive), but rather on a concrete relationship and common action. KUD Obrat explains that their goal was not some new homogenous collective, but a heterogeneous community that will connect equality with difference and *vice versa*:

A unified community erases the differences and contradictions, as well as the productive conflicts and negotiations that are necessarily connected with the aim of sharing (space, tools, water, etc.). This aspect of conflict and negotiation is crucial, for it has to do with managing the relationships among differences rather than affirming commonalities based on similarities. In contrast to an idea of community based on a notion of identity and belonging (“being in”), which is, in this sense, always exclusionary for “others,” we are striving for a community that produces more open and fluid relationships in order to foster a sense of “being with”. (ibid.)

When the collective offered first theoretical reflection of the project they reiterated that the empowerment of the public and inclusion of the public in decision-making process was most important aspects of the project. The collective still warned that we should not overly romanticize participation *per se*. Instead of reiterating participation, we should, as already noted above, rather aim towards *praxis* or a philosophical category of practice. The same holds also for art, architecture and urban planning, where participation and practice is becoming increasingly more instrumentalized. The performative dimension of the *Beyond the Construction Site* project should rather be understood as an objection to the republican interpretation of citizenship as a universal office, conscripting rather than mobilizing the *demos* to participate in the *res publica*, and epitomized in the *levée en masse* (1793) and *La Marseillaise* (“Aux armes, citoyens!”) (cf. Walzer 1995: 211–12). The collective thus warns that participation cannot and should not become a standardized norm or technique, for this presupposes a standardized participant. Just as there is no abstract community of participants, there is also no single common general participation method. Instead of searching for general instruments and tools that would introduce a sort of a dialogue into architectural and urban planning, we should strive to formulate a participative practice as an *altering practice* (a term coined by Doina Petrescu) – a critical spatial practice that is aware of power relations, asks ethical questions, takes social responsibility, and reinvents itself with every new project in a different context. (KUD Obrat 2011)

Chris Carlsson (2008: 82) argues that in a communal garden “time opens up for conversation, debate, and a wider view than that provided by the univocal, self-referential spectacle promoted by the mass media”. *Beyond a Construction Site* soon became the source of power, identity, occupation, and, needless to say, food. It became a place of experimentation, innovation and prefiguration. The garden was not only giving everyone access to fulfilling occupations and food self-sufficiency, but it also enabled immigrants – e.g., a family from Russia was amongst the active participants of the project before moving back, now a whole family from Japan is part of the project along other *denizens* and *margizens* – to make first connections with neighbourhood population, and hence get a sense of community and empowerment. The project thus confirms Gerard Delanty (2007: 24) when he argues that citizenship also “takes place in communicative situations arising out of quite ordinary life experiences”. For Delanty, citizenship in a global age is no longer national citizenship only, “realized (...) as a condition secured by the state but is also pertinent to subnational levels, such as local and regional levels. In this regard, what is particularly important is the level of the city as a basis of citizenship” (ibid., 26). Even more, for Manuel Castells (1994), the cities are replacing the nation states, witnessing a slow erosion of their power, as “a driving force” in current and future political developments.



We can find similar results highlighting the *potentia* of the city in similar projects elsewhere, where the plots “become catalysts of community development, as the networks and other social capital formed over gardens are deployed to (...) serving other community needs” (McKay 2011: 182). For instance, in the case of the *Loisaida* – a migrant pronunciation of Lower East Side – community gardens in New York City, the project triggered interaction and cooperation amongst various migrant communities whilst preserving their migrant culture. For the Latino communities, small garden houses, *casitas*, are a symbol of their culture and lifestyle. In the interplay between various communities, the *casitas* received new features and design, and very often the *casita* was built or maintained by groups from different cultural backgrounds that have kept up the original spirit of the *casita*. Ashram Acres in Birmingham (UK), a community garden started in the early 1980s, is also appraised as an example of intercultural dialogue and inclusion of migrant communities that successfully surpasses the limitations of narrow multiculturalism, because it does not place civic practice within the framework of the nation-state, it does not aim towards the *integration* of “others” that can, at the same time, lead to their *exclusion* or *subjugation*, it is not apolitical, thus ignoring the problem of power relations, inequality and exclusion. The garden, which was initiated by a local community activist working with a local migrant population, empowered groups otherwise marginalized by the mainstream society and allowed them to “reconnect to their own cultural identity through the crops they grow, and they work across cultures by co-operating with people from different parts of the world growing different things. Nobody gets any ‘wealthier’ – but everybody is enriched” (ibid.: 181–82).

## CONCLUSIONS

With the current processes of economic globalization, the nation-state is being forced to redefine its position and purpose, thereby also significantly transforming the arena of political participation. What is left from Marshall’s triad of citizenship rights is largely only political rights, and we can therefore understand objections that citizenship is nowadays merely a legal status without a performative dimension.

Since the contemporary world has rendered customary methods of civic action obsolete, Howard Zinn (2009: 608) maintains that political change should “/m/ore likely be a process, with periods of tumult and of quiet, in which we will, here and there, by ones and twos and tens, create pockets of concern inside old institutions, transforming them from within. (...) We must begin *now* to liberate those patches of ground on which we stand – to ‘vote’ for a new world (as Thoreau suggested) with our whole selves all the time, rather than in moments carefully selected by others.”

The solution is therefore prefigurative politics as an attempt to create the future in the present through political and economic organizing alone, or at least to foresee social changes to which we aspire. It is indeed an attempt to overcome current limitations with a construction of alternatives from the bottom-up since it foresees a renewal of the political power of local communities, and their federation into a global network. Exactly this idea is embodied in that the community garden of the *Beyond the Construction Site* project, fomenting new forms of collective action and new forms of political membership better suited to intercultural dialogue and inclusion of migrant communities than are nation-states.

To begin our analysis, we introduced a new concept of citizenship that goes beyond citizenship as a normative disposition (citizenship-as-status), since it is grounded in an actual political practice (citizenship-as-activity). We argued that it is necessary to rescue citizenship from the narrow statist confines that reduce citizenship to a legal status. A new citizenship, we called it translocal citizenship, is thus constituted beyond the nation-state, sometimes in opposition to it, but always transcending the parochial forms of political community that make global connectedness impossible. We also showed how translocal citizenship does not represent the depoliticization of political membership but rather a substantive understanding of the concept that in past decades has been reduced to a legal status without substance.

In the second part, we focused on the *Beyond a Construction Site* project initiated by KUD Obrat, which was used as a case study of new translocal citizenship in practice. The project evokes Haig Patapan's (2007) conceptualization of "friendship as citizenship", that "can flourish and reveal its considerable strengths and advantages" only in the local. The détourned construction site – community garden in this way represents a part of truly global network of direct democracy that, in its fight against social exclusion and the "trivialization of citizenship", restores the idea of direct democracy and citizenship in its original meaning and purpose. The new citizenship "growing" on the project site does not offer a modest modification of the traditional conception of citizenship as a special relationship between the state and citizen whose contents are certain rights and duties, but instead offers a new understanding of political membership within translocal polities, where the mechanical link between rights and duties is finally loosened, as is the relationship between equality and difference. The project revealed that the garden should not be only a place of "power and pain", but also a place of "harmonious enlightenment, equality and pleasure" (Burrell and Dale 2002: 107; cf. Munro 2002), as it is a place not only for *Homo Faber* (the "working man"), but also *Homo Ludens* (the "playing man").

We are left hoping that the article and, above all, the *Beyond a Construction Site* project have succeeded in demonstrating that translocal citizenship cannot be understood as a naïve, utopian fantasy but rather as a lucid critique of the existing social, economic and political *status quo* as well as a strategy for achieving a different world, a world where many worlds fit. Here, the innovation on the micro-level should be guided by Colin Ward (2011: 30) who warns that "the choice between libertarian and authoritarian solutions occurs every day and in every way, and the extent to which we choose, or accept, or are fobbed off with, or lack the imagination and inventiveness to discover alternatives to, the authoritarian solutions to small problems is the extent to which we are their powerless victims in big affairs."

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## POVZETEK

### ONKRAJ GRADBIŠČA, ONKRAJ NACIONALNEGA DRŽAVLJANSTVA: INFRAPOLITIKA DRŽAVLJANSTVA

Žiga VODOVNIK

Danes, ko nacionalna država ni več edini center suverenosti in prostor sprejemanja ključnih političnih odločitev, poskusi zamišljanja novih oblik državljanstva politično članstvo čedalje bolj ločujejo od države in ga konstituira po novih kriterijih. Članek posega v te razprave s konceptom translokalnega državljanstva, ki se oddaljuje od nacionalne države kot glavne referenčne točke, in ki hkrati zavrača njegovo oblikovanje v okviru novih nadnacionalnih entitet. Avtor v refleksiji translokalnega državljanstva izpostavlja pomen novih oblik kolektivne akcije in nove oblike političnega članstva, ki ga omogoča državljanstvo na lokalnem nivoju.

Na primeru študije projekta *Onkraj gradbišča*, s katerim je KUD Obrat opuščen gradbišče spremenil v skupnostni vrt, avtor konstatira, da so lahko projekti na mikro ravni bolj primerna osnova za medkulturni dialog in vključevanje migrantskih skupnosti kot pa nacionalna država. Kot poudarja avtor, je ta ugotovitev še toliko pomembnejša, če pri tem upoštevamo, da smo v zadnjih desetletjih z naraščajočimi stopnjami mobilnosti globalnega demosa priča le delnemu vključevanju političnih subjektov v politične skupnosti. To posledično vodi v hierarhizacijo članov politične skupnosti oz. naraščajoče število nepopolnopravnih članov skupnosti (*denizens* ali *marginizens*). Razkrivanje omejitev statusnega državljanstva, pri tem pa kritika statusnega determinizma, ki je v sami genezi nacionalnega državljanstva, seveda ne sme pomeniti razumevanja translokalnega državljanstva kot brezstatusne kategorije, saj gre zgolj za poskus municipalizacije demokracije in političnega članstva. Cilj prispevka tako ni naivna negacija kategorije državljanstva, ampak prispevek k afirmaciji drugačnega razumevanja in prakticiranja državljanstva v

globaliziranem svetu, pri čemer municipalizacija političnega članstva ne pomeni vračanje v parohialne oblike političnega članstva, ki onemogočajo globalno delovanje ali povezovanje.

Po avtorjevi oceni je potreba po takšni redefiniciji državljanstva večja v okoljih, kjer so težave pri razumevanju odnosa med konceptom državljanstva in države tudi na jezikovni ravni pogojene z niveliranjem političnega članstva na narodno ali celo etnično pripadnost, čeprav je etimološki izvor besede – od koncepta *civitas*, *civitatus*, pa vse do modernega *citoyen* – politično članstvo vezal vedno na manjše in bolj fluidne politične skupnosti. Državljanstvo je tako dobilo izključevalni aspekt prav preko utrjevanja fizičnih in kulturnih meja posameznih držav, s čimer je državljanstvo postalo instrument izključevanja oz. vključevanja v politično skupnost. V izhodišču se državljanstvo nikoli ni vezalo na državo ali narod, ampak je pomenilo izključno specifični »urbani odnos« med pravicami in dolžnostmi v mestu. Zato lahko po avtorju idejo državljanstva (*citizenship*), ki je pomenila članstvo v mestu (*city*), razumemo tudi kot zgodovinski argument po ponovni municipalizaciji politike.

Avtor v študiji projekta *Onkraj gradbišča* ugotavlja, da translokalnega državljanstva ne gre enačiti s političnim članstvom v ožjem pomenu besede, saj translokarno državljanstvo nudi povsem drugačno – širše in globlje – razumevanje demokracije. Tako je tudi zmotno govoriti samo o »državljanu države«, pač pa je treba rekonstruirati tudi druge oblike »državljanstva«, ki se konstituirajo po drugih kriterijih. Kljub temu translokalnega državljanstva spet ne gre razumeti kot depolitizacijo političnega članstva, saj gre zgolj za ekspliciranje performativne dimenzije novega državljanstva. Pri tem avtor izhaja iz koncepta infrapolitike, ki politično delovanje širi onkraj institucionalizirane politike. Infrapolitika namreč ni zgolj rezultat politične nuje v primeru nedemokratskih političnih sistemov, pač pa je čedalje bolj tudi »tihi partner« javnega delovanja v modernih demokracijah. Teza, ki iz tega sledi je, da se državljanstvo realizira ravno preko navidežno »nepomembnih« in »nepolitičnih« dejanj, ki jih aktualne razprave o demokraciji in državljanstvu žal nikoli ne detektirajo.