Introduction: Rights, Cultures, Subjects and Citizens

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Introduction: Rights, Cultures, Subjects and Citizens

This special issue arose from a concern with the political logic of the foregrounding of collective culture(s) in the context of changing citizenship regimes.[1] Its key focus is the conjuncture in which 'culture' – claims of a collective distinction concerning heritage, location, moralities and values – has become the terrain of political struggles over the subject of rights in national and international politics, the re-allocation of entitlements, definitions of value, and new forms of political representation. This appears to be linked to contemporary processes of neo-liberalization, the politics of which are often defined in terms of economic policies promoting private accumulation, entrepreneurship and free markets, but which typically also include a project of governance in which not only individuals, but also collective agents – which may be 'cultural' entities – are charged with increasing responsibility for their own regulation, welfare and enterprise, but in a depoliticized and bureaucratized mode (Santos, 2005). Citizenship is central here as the modern political and legal institution which links certain notions of personal rights and duties with the structures of governance and political agency, on the one hand, and with the national, and by extension, transnational economy, on the other.

Citizenship, as a sociological concept, involves political and legal, as well as cultural and social aspects that inform an individual's possibilities of participation in the public sphere. In classic liberalism, the concept of citizenship linked ideas of merit or 'civilization' with that of the 'unencumbered self' (Sandel, 1984), evoking a unitary political subject whose rights were derived not just from the state or other law-making institutions, but extrapolated from self-owned 'freedoms', that is, from human self-actualization as a self-governing, economizing, and self-sustained individual. There is a clear tension between this classic liberal perspective on human nature, individual equality and citizenship, and current trends within a global 'neoliberal' context towards state recognition of cultural difference and identity as the basis for new forms of citizen rights, now broadly understood to include not only political but also cultural rights. This active recognition has been linked to the success of grassroots movements ranging from the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, to de-

colonialization movements, anti-racist movements, indigenous movements and gay/lesbian movements – the so-called 'new social movements' – which highlighted the potential ethnocentric, sexist, class-based and racist assumptions said by critics to underlie the categories and practices of citizenship. These struggles, to a large extent, went beyond claiming formal political citizenship or the right to vote (which struggles had already widely achieved, although, for women, not until well into the twentieth century), and pushed instead for integrative forms of cultural and social citizenship and the legalizing of practices central to this. This resulted in a progressive reformulation of legislations to allow more room for cultural diversity, acceptance of the value of different historical experiences, ways of living and of cultural expression, and the protection of diverse cultural heritage, if necessary through legislating particular and collective cultural rights (as in the case of indigenous peoples in Latin America and elsewhere).

Increasingly, however, the narrative of a grass-roots victory defining this process of integration through difference is being challenged by theoretical perspectives which point out that the reification of culture*s* as a source of shared values, internal discipline and differentiation against various others might, especially in a *neo*-liberal context, not necessarily clash either with an interest in producing self-governing (i.e. disciplined and thus 'free') citizens, nor with the aim of governments to control and regulate populations, nor with goals of class restoration, capital accumulation and oligarchic rule (Harvey, 2005; Zizek, 1997). Nikolas Rose (1999, ch. 5), for example, argues that culture has emerged as a 'third space' of governing, allowing 'advanced liberalism' to combine a rolling back of the state and an expansion of market principles, with new forms of disciplining citizens and controlling social anomy. For Rose, collective culture is thus not only *not* opposed to liberalism in an 'advanced' stage, but, as part of an overall process of privatization, new cultural communities become the extended arm of governments intent on 'outsourcing' public functions; in this sense, a reconstituted 'culture' becomes one arena to produce 'free' citizens.

We might add here that these developments – which even made inroads into the People's Republic of China as part of a government strategy to secure party control and successfully compete on the global market (Zhang & Ong, 2008) – obviously have some relation to the collapse of an older 'socialist alternative' whose oppositional presence shaped liberal government in the decades before. The Cold War opposition between individualism and collectivism, which sustained governing discourses and forms of citizenship on both sides (Brandtstädter, 2007), appears to have collapsed into a new global 'harmony' of

governance involving a pervasive anti-politics discourse, a celebration of markets and law as rational, as well as 'just', mechanisms of social regulation, a new acceptance of political authoritarianism and surveillance (despite a discourse of widening choice and citizen participation), and a 'culture agenda' that appears to be the object of incessant public debates, obsessions and anxieties.

This 'culture agenda' appears as the distinguishing moment between classic liberal visions of a civil society, made up of 'unencumbered selves' organized on the basis of individual interest and choice, and a neo-liberal acceptance of culture as a source of identity politics, different 'types' of subjects, and forms of social organization. A multicultural turn is certainly most striking in classic liberal countries like the UK and the US, but also Latin America where the notion of citizenship followed the original liberal model, but where too new forms of cultural expression by 'marked others' (as against the un-marked citizen) have gained more presence in the public sphere, and where especially indigenous people have achieved important legal protection. Writing from the Latin American experience, Charles Hale suggests, that 'compensatory measures to disadvantaged cultural groups [..] are an integral part of neo-liberal ideology. These distinctive cultural politics (along with their socio-political counterparts), rather than simply the temporal lapse between classic liberalism and its latter day incarnation, are what give the "neo" its real meaning' (Hale, 2005, p. 12).

Yet, we believe that to understand the use of 'culture' and cultural difference in contemporary politics and processes of governance, it is important to recognize the depth of history and a geographical spread that nuances a presumed link between neo-liberalism and multiculturalism. After all, colonial policies in the British Empire enshrined cultural differences in ways that paralleled later mechanisms of governance in apartheid South Africa. Moreover, as the papers in this special issue show, the 'culture agenda' is not confined to societies run on liberal principles. As a radical modern ideology, socialism, like liberalism, was theoretically hostile to pre-modern cultural formations. Nevertheless, socialist empires (such as the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China) reified minority cultures by applying the Stalinist definition of ethnos to classify separate ethnic groups, and often implemented 'autonomous territories' in traditional settlement areas. Minority cultures – and even 'peasant culture' in China (Cohen, 2005, ch. 3) – were clearly re-constituted in the interest of socialist development and centralized Party control. Ethnic customs and traditions were supported when they 'coloured' the vision of socialist internationalism within one state (see Kandiyoti, 2000) and did not obstruct state-making. If they appeared politically 'harmful' or – to use a Chinese term – 'splittist', then they were (and still are) violently

repressed. Socialist cultural politics are not the same as liberal multiculturalism, but they nevertheless demonstrate striking parallels to multiculturalism as a mode of making 'others' and of governing diversity within one state. Such 'harmonies' have become very evident in the case of contemporary China. Here, where the issue of culture – both minority and Han – became a topic of obsessive public debates in the 1980s (see Wang, 1996, ch. 2), the government promotes 'good' cultural traditions that support overall 'societal harmony', while expressive 'local' culture is being rapidly commodified for tourist consumption, and has become an important source of government revenue. At the same time, custom-culture and 'civilizedness' – the latter defined as characterizing the ideal citizen subject – stand in a contradictory relation, which constantly produces internal cultural others that help to (re)define civilization 'with Chinese characteristics'. As Asad says: 'The claim that many radical critics make that hegemonic power necessarily suppresses difference in favour of unity is quite mistaken. Just as mistaken is their claim that power always abhors ambiguity. To secure its unity – to make its own history – dominant power has worked best through differentiating and classifying practices' (1993: 17).

Still, the increasing promotion and recognition of cultural rights in international legislation and the spread of official multiculturalism in many areas of the world, as well as the proliferation of public debates on 'culture' as political problem more generally, indicate that it has arguably become an ever more central terrain for governance and struggles around rights and citizenship, especially as the object of judicial or quasi-judicial legislation. Of course, the politics of culture are realized within the framework of different states, giving them a different spin and historical trajectory in each case. As the papers in this volume demonstrate, they must be analyzed with ethnographic sensitivity to these specific local and national dynamics. Nevertheless, by combining case studies from different world regions, we hope that a cross-cultural comparison sheds more light on the political dynamics of regulation and democratic empowerment through 'culture'.

The following papers take up various strands of these issues and lines of argument, in order to re-examine the particular conjuncture between opportunities for political and legal action, the affirmation of collective cultures, globalization, and government regulation. All the papers, from various perspectives, explore the relation between culture (as collective values), civility (as the formation moral and social subjectivities) and the politics of citizenship. But instead of assuming a hidden systemic logic which, when discovered, would resolve the tension between cultural difference and citizenship in one or the other way, we insist on the importance of an ethnographic exploration of particular cases, and on a

comparative approach to understanding processes of political subject becoming and regulation in new citizenship regimes. That is, we do not accept that opposites are being collapsed into one another (along the lines of 'war is peace'), but insist on the tensions between democracy and inequality, equality and hierarchy, sameness and uniqueness, liberty and order, freedom and coercion. A key thread linking the papers is the idea that official reifications of 'culture' as part of the package of citizenship, and even the recognition of cultural rights, may obey state strategies of governance and control (often, but not always, linked to neo-liberal agendas), but that, at the same time, citizens may use new cultural rights and networks, and the legal mechanisms that have been created to protect them, in order to pursue their own agendas of empowerment.

Liberalism and its contradictions

Liberalism is not the main political rationality underlying all the contexts examined here – China being an obvious exception. But it has been central to the USA (Glick-Schiller's geographical focus) and Latin America (Hale's and Sieder's focus). In addition, it has been suggested that in China a 'new social' is organized along economic and legal principles that respond not just to the Party state but also to the forces of neo-liberal globalization, and that this has emerged as the source of new subjectivities, and strategies of self-regulation and of citizen-becoming (Zhang and Ong 2008, see also Fong and Murphy 2006). Most importantly, all the countries examined by the authors in this special issue are influenced by an international context shaped powerfully by liberal principles of economic practice as well as notions of (cultural) citizenship rights that emerge from a liberal political rationality and the contradictions and tensions underlying it. In view of this, it is useful to briefly examine the liberal notions of citizenship and political order that have shaped Western European and American contexts.

In the Americas, indigenous populations and the import of African slaves made the original liberal question 'who can rule' (Rose & Miller, 2008, p. 206) the basis for new diversified forms of citizenship, and of strategies of inclusion and exclusion centring on the 'problem' of 'racial' (and also cultural) others. Also in Western Europe, the formation of liberalism, as well as its political 'protoform' secular enlightenment, is historically related to the experience of religious wars and colonial encounters with 'savages' living beyond the borders of the 'civilised' world, which have had a profound influence on ideas of the rational, free citizen (Asad, 2003). The political theory of liberalism, with its emphasis on natural

rights as the foundation of citizen rights, implies a sharing of at least similar views of what rights and duties involve, in short, it means the sharing of a worldview – which liberalism might call civilization, but which itself can be described as a particular cultural form or mode, articulated with a national one. Classic liberalism, promoting freedom and equal rights, was from the beginning deeply invested in cultural hierarchization, exposing an ideology best characterized with the old joke that 'all are equal but some are more equal than others'. For John Locke, it was the possession of reason that led to acceptance of the Law, while emotional temperance – a quality exemplified by male, property-owning Englishmen – was the condition for self-government. Others, such as women, wage labourers, children and servants, who did not fully possess such temperance and lacked the proper education had to be excluded from political society (Mehta, 1997: 65-70). Early British political liberalism, as well as French, excluded large swathes of the population from the right to vote, as John Stuart Mill argued in *The Subjection of Women* (1929 [1869]). Mill answered the question 'who can rule' by drawing the line between civilization and barbarism. Civilization was the precondition for political citizenship as the epitome of universal human development. But it also had a concrete place and culture, which was that of Europe in general and Great Britain in particular. As he wrote in *On Liberty*, for the uncivilized 'despotism is a legitimate mode of government [...] *provided the end be their improvement*' (1975 [1859], p. 15-16, quoted in Passavant, 1996, p. 312). In 'Considerations of Representative Government', he phrased the relation between liberal democracy and culture as one structured by authoritarianism – the 'first lesson of civilization [is] that of obedience' (1975 [1859], p. 202, in Passavant, 1996, p. 310).

This Millian paradigm, within Europe reflected in deeply authoritarian family relations, was political practice in a colonial context. It can also easily be applied to modern China, where the aim of early 20th century modernizers to transform the population into a powerful nation resulted in the political rejection of its culturally 'backward' elements, and where, post-Mao, a political discourse on civilization and the rule of law has developed within a deeply authoritarian political environment (not to mention an exceedingly successful market economy),. If the tension between universal equality and particular difference is the first tension within liberal ideology, then the tension between universal freedom and authoritarian discipline, or even total exclusion from 'civilized society', is the second. The third contradiction derives from the relation between freedom and equality, in so far as the idea of freedom presupposes human equality but leads to inequality, and hence to unfreedom. This is of course the contradiction where socialism intervened, replacing the liberal

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individual with the class subject, and the free market economy and private property with a planned state economy and public, or collective property as the basis for socialist citizenship. Liberals may claim that liberalism only ever mandates equality of opportunity, but persistent inequality of outcome inevitably suggests that opportunities are not, in fact, equal; and only some of this inequality can be explained by different natural abilities. In fact, pursuing the opportunities open to one as an individual can lead to a structural hierarchy of unequal outcomes, which itself constrains equality of opportunity at a collective level. Further, if liberalism mandates that each individual has the right to autonomy and self-determination, then everyone is the same in this respect. But it is a short step from ideas of personal autonomy to ideas of personal identity and the desire that one's selfhood be recognized by others – which implies differentiation and distinction (Taylor & Gutmann, 1994, p. 43). This might be called a Romantic gloss on Enlightenment liberalism – a concern with the particular character or spirit of persons, nations, places – but it is also a tension that exists within classic liberalism itself. The autonomy of the self can only be realized when others recognize you as distinct and thus different. The autonomy that all individuals desire, and that liberalism vindicates as the key value which we (ideally) share equally, is paradoxically a dependent condition that depends on differentiation.

Citizenship and Pluralism

Since the establishment of liberal thought, liberal regimes have dealt with these tensions through the politics of citizenship. The most common practice has been to exclude a subset of the population from political rights and the rights and freedoms enshrined in liberal citizenship, usually by virtue of a supposed incapacity to exercise such rights or discharge of the accompanying obligations. In this way, women, children, those without literary skills and those classified as racially other have all, in different places and at different times, been formally or informally excluded from public and political participation. In nineteenth-century Latin America, for example, many of the new states started with property-based requirements for suffrage and virtually all adopted literacy-based requirements later on, with some countries retaining such restrictions into the late twentieth century (e.g., Brazil until 1988 or Peru until 1979). In contrast, the USA moved from economic restrictions towards race-based requirements (until 1870, when this was outlawed) and thence to literacy requirements, until these were outlawed in 1965 (Engerman & Sokoloff, 2005). Literacy requirements notoriously discriminated against the poor and the non-white. As mentioned above, in the UK

voting restrictions were mainly based on property and were successively loosened over the nineteenth century but not lifted until 1918. The first French Constitution (1791) made the distinction between active and passive citizens, with the latter being denied political rights. Gender remained an explicit bar to voting rights well into the twentieth century. Such formal *restrictions* were often justified by naturalizing ideologies, based on contemporary science that defined those excluded as less able to cope with the demands and privileges of full citizenship.

Classical liberalism is generally depicted as being 'culture-blind', as starting from the assumption of the 'unencumbered self' as the natural human. But, as we argued above, culture was always part of liberal citizen regimes in the negative: the coloured, the indigenous, the poor, the women were at various times and places seen having a culture (often defined as irrational and passion-driven) incompatible with civilized citizenship (see Mehta, 1997). Also in a positive way liberalism was deeply entrenched with 'cultural pluralism', an entrenchment directly evident in the interchangeability of the terms citizen and national. The constitution of distinct national cultures appeared paramount here. In the United States, Indians were obviously 'natives', so *ius solis* should have applied. They were nevertheless excluded from citizenship for a long time: first, they were defined as 'incapacitated, by their mental debasement' and politically turned into wards of the state. Education as a way to citizen-becoming (Mills' suggestion) was then precluded by a second clause, which declared tribal Indians 'aliens' as they 'were born under the jurisdiction of their tribes and tribes [were] considered nations of some sovereignty within the territorial United States' (Holston, 2008, p. 54). In France it was 'the Jewish question' that was the issue for many debates over the relation between culture (combining religion and morality), and citizenship. Whereas those opposing Jewish citizenship argued that Jewish character and culture precluded their becoming French citizens, those in favour did not so much question the cultural argument, but maintained that French sovereignty could not allow Jews to become a separate nation within the nation; instead, they had to be granted citizenship *on an individual basis* (Holston, 2008, p. 44-45). In Latin America, nation-building in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century was often based on ideas of *mestizaje* (racial and cultural mixture) which was said to produce a homogenous, whitened citizen; in this blackness and indigenousness were generally seen as backward, primitive elements. Yet many Latin American elites were also cognizant, and sometimes appreciative, of the cultural diversity in their nations: a liberal tolerance was evident in some cases, as long as the basic direction of the nation's future was decided by elite white men (Wade, 2005).

Cultural difference and the governing of the social

Rose and Miller (2008, p. 86-90) argue that by the early twentieth century, governments in North America and Europe recognized that 'the social' was a domain for which they had to take some political responsibility; though they did so to a lesser extent than socialist governments did. It was now up to the state to intervene in protection, rights and justice and social solidarity for its citizen. This shift was not just confined to individual states, but also the basis of a transnational liberal order enshrined in international conventions such as the ILO's conventions on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (Convention 107 of 1957 and the better known Convention 169 of 1989). By the mid to late twentieth century, such a concern had expanded to encompass the beginnings of state intervention into cultural difference and its consequences for equal opportunity. With this shift towards a greater recognition of difference, a distinction between identity (as a sense of being in relation to others) and citizenship (as a sense of being a citizen of the nation-state) has become increasingly blurred as the concept of citizenship extends into 'cultural' realms, strongly mediated by ideas of difference (Cowan, Dembour, & Wilson, 2001; Ong, 1999; Rosaldo, 1999; Wade, 2000; Wilson, 1996; Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999).

In the 1960s, the USA introduced affirmative action policies for its black citizens, Canada adopted multicultural politics in 1971 first in the interest of the French speaking minority, and later for its indigenous peoples. In the 1990s, a large number of Latin American states adopted constitutional and other legislative reforms to recognize, and in some cases give special rights, to ethnic minorities (Van Cott, 2000). Increased attention to diversity has not been limited to ethnic difference: gender difference remains a major driver of this trend, as is sexual difference and, to a lesser extent, age. Difference is, one could say, itself diversifying, by a mutually reinforcing demand for equal recognition for an increasing number of 'identities', and governing policies that seek to define, with an ever-expanding set of criteria, 'others' within national society. The causes of this overall shift are manifold: linked to international or, now, transnational movements for liberation and equal recognition, which often sought to introduce socialist elements into liberal society, and to new forms of international legislation couched in the language of human and cultural rights to enforce the recognition and protection of difference in national law (Latin America and Eastern Europe are cases in point). One result of this process has been the emergence of a kaleidoscope of standardized differences, which all reflect the nominal position of the 'normal citizen'; in

other words, reflect on the particular national configuration of 'normalcy' (rather than dismantling it). This is also evident in government policy circles which assimilate all these axes of difference to 'diversity' in a commitment to social inclusivity, or, in contemporary China, to 'social stability' and 'harmony'. Reform China does not formally recognize culture as the source of different types of legal citizenship or citizen rights. Nevertheless, variations on 'affirmative action' can be found in exemptions from the one-child policy for national minorities (and its less strict version for 'peasants'), and in local government investments' into regional cultural traditions and products deemed valuable from a historical, economic and national perspective. Representations of inclusion are sought after also in other arenas. For example, sport and leisure activities have increasingly become the target of social inclusion politics, implemented by a whole range of different apparatuses or voluntary as well as state organizations in Western countries like the USA or the UK (Woodward, 2007). Multicultural nation-building in Britain has even transformed 'traditional' forms of difference, such as class. Evans, for example, notes how working-class white Londoners are beginning to talk about their class position in cultural terms, in order to participate and be recognized as much as other 'ethnics'.[2]

Critics of multiculturalism have contended that liberalism is able to take account of difference and that the apparent contradiction between sameness/equality and difference/inequality is not politically paralysing insofar as a liberal rule of law allows a democratic openness in which the 'self-understanding of a collectivity' can make itself felt (Habermas, 2000, p. 217). Other common critiques make a different political point: namely that multiculturalism creates divisions in society (along racial, ethnic, gender lines), that it ghettoizes cultural minorities and indeed limits the rights of their members (Bissoondath, 1994) and, above all, that it diverts attention from the underlying structural issue of class inequalities (Barry, 2000). Charles Hale (2002, 2005) in contrast, has proposed a more elaborate interrelation by coining the term neo-liberal multiculturalism. He argues that, while neo-liberal market reforms and associated changes in governance seem to favour the individual as an autonomous actor in the market place, in fact neo-liberalism is not as resistant to group rights and the idea of collective difference as its liberal tag leads one to expect. This is not so much because, as Habermas might contend, liberal democracies are able to deal with collective differences through the normal mechanisms of democracy and dialogue, but because it suits the purposes of government to institutionalise certain ethno-cultural categories and groups (and thereby undermining the formation of others, of political *excess),* and to co-opt communities in *policing* this difference. In short, then, the 'culture

agenda' may act as a mode of governance to control the effects of population diversity in a context of new transnational involvements, such as the international legal regimes discussed by Sieder in this special issue, which recognize certain entitlements on the basis of cultural difference. This may help explain why many states – and not just ones traditionally founded on liberal principles – have actively adopted a discourse on 'culture' (and cultural variety) not just to discriminate against various 'others', but as a growing 'third space' (Rose) in which to regulate citizenship.

However, such a mode of governance can also supply 'communities' with new tools for self-understanding and political action, which may go against the intentions of the oligarchic state and other entities involved in decentralized modes of 'culturalist' governance. The papers in this special issue focus precisely on these dialectics of culture and citizen formation in diverse settings. We foreground contradictions, paradoxes and tensions to enquire into dynamics of control and emancipation, the reach of neo-liberal policies over the formation of subjectivities, and on the relation between citizen rights, cultural diversity and transnational linkages.

Rights, cultures and (im)possible subjects: the papers

Charles Hale's paper outlines the key traits of what he has called neo-liberal multiculturalism, which many of the other papers engage with, either explicitly or by introducing important nuances and/or comparative contexts. Hale explores the contradictions and entanglements of black and indigenous land rights struggles in Central America, focusing on a number of activist associations and their experiences. He demonstrates how contradictions between activists' goals and forms of accommodations, as well as problems involving political leadership and economic sustainability in territories which have gained some autonomy from the central state, are exacerbated by strategies of neo-liberal governance and the emerging 'entrepreneurial' state. Paradoxically, he suggests, among the most daunting obstacles to liberatory action is not the repression or denial of rights, but rather, partial recognition and the bureaucratic-political entanglements that follow in new regimes of 'neo-liberal multiculturalism'. Collective territorial rights for indigenous groups have been justified on the basis of radical cultural difference, a view also recently adopted by institutions such as the World Bank, and increasingly accepted by Central American states themselves. While collective cultural rights over territory seem to contradict both the interests of capitalist expansion and of the territorial state, Hale argues that they no longer do so, as these states,

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their modes of governance and their articulation with global capitalism have changed. Collective territorial rights for indigenous and black communities are granted in the context of the decreasing profitability of agriculture, and in economically marginal areas, for which a new entrepreneurial state withdraws responsibility, while allowing even more unfettered economic exploitation in other areas and, by fixing marginal communities in 'place', ensuring oligarchic rule. Nevertheless, a collective identification with a particular cultural heritage continues to provide the basis for grass-roots mobilization and for utopian political projects. Hale suggests that a key to maintaining a radical critique of neo-liberal hegemony is to re-link the 'pragmatic' struggle for economic resources with the politics of the 'impossible subject'; a link that brought forth indigenous activism in the first place, but that neo-liberal accommodations are increasingly successful in severing.

The paper by Nina Glick-Schiller deals with the transnational foundations of contemporary nation-states and practices of citizenship, as well as the strategic denial of such foundations on the side of national policy-makers. Here, one effect of the liberal politics of naturalizing both equality and difference – namely the depoliticization of *in*equality – is discussed within a current, Western context of immigration, nationalism and multiculturalism. A political rhetoric on multiculture and value integration is contrasted with the situated social practices of activists and immigrants that create new forms of conviviality within neo-liberalizing states.

Glick-Schiller's paper examines the discourse on citizenship and cultural values in an immigrant receiving city in the USA. She critiques the standard approach to immigration and citizenship that foregrounds the ethnic ties that migrants maintain to communities of origin. Instead she explores the religious affiliations that link migrants to potentially global networks. The city officials of Manchester, in New Hampshire, USA, deploy multiculturalism in an attempt to re-brand and promote their city in the face of its marginal status in the neo-liberalizing USA. But migrants often avoided participating in or backing this multicultural agenda, at least in public displays (even if in more private, domestic settings, ethnic ties had continuing relevance in some respects). They instead preferred to engage in other fields of social connection, for example those generated by global religions (Buddhism, Islam and fundamentalist Christianity). The values espoused by these religions – rather conservative views of the family and sexuality for example – values tended to resonate rather well with those of New Hampshire natives. Migrant preferences for religious activity did not, however, correspond to a rejection of the city's attempts at neo-liberal reform: at the level of family – rather than ethnic community – migrants were often eager to invest their time and

resources in urban gentrification, city-centre regeneration and small business enterprise, using kin networks to underwrite such activities. Glick-Schiller's article suggests that multiculturalism can be seen as a resource for neo-liberal reformers – a depoliticized brand image – but that the actual operation of 'ethnic cultures' is more complex: migrants seek to challenge the economic inequality they face and work across public/private divides, using a variety of resources and networks – including religious and ethnic-kinship ones – to achieve this.

Glick-Schiller examines neo-liberal citizenship by focusing on forms of social inclusion that are not primarily ethnic or national, that are rooted in collective engagements and that can be contrasted with a discourse of national exclusiveness, cultural values, persistent inequalities and upward financial flows. Neo-liberal agendas are linked to the commodification and marketing of (ethnic) culture as part of a policy of city governance and income-generation. But migrants have an ambivalent response: they participate in urban regeneration in ways that, while they may support city policies, are aimed at consolidating family fortunes, not ethnic communities; at the same time, they reach beyond the multicultural agenda towards global religions. This nuances links between neo-liberalism and multiculturalism. Not only can the subjects defined by multicultural policies use those policies to their advantage – as has often been observed – they can also engage resources that reach outside the scope of narrow multiculturalism.

The following papers by Sieder and Brandtstädter focus on how a judicialization of the political – a phenomenon that can be observed worldwide (e.g., Comaroff and Comaroff 2006) – can lead to new exchanges between cultural politics, strategies of political participation through claims on 'rights' and the political economy. Sieder's paper is concerned with the politics of indigenous rights and multiculturalism in neo-liberal Latin America and is the closest cousin to Hale's essay. Brandtstädter's paper speaks to these concerns from the 'reverse' perspective of 'neosocialist' China, where a new politics of creating self-regulating (rather than self-governing) citizens from the old socialist 'masses', has resulted in efforts to 're-culturalize' the peasant category as the nation's 'other'; a politics that is also contested by the new rural law activism. As in Hale's paper, land struggles form a key in peasants' efforts to turn such otherness into a source of emancipatory politics.

Rachel Sieder's paper focus on the effects of the judicialization of the political struggle for indigenous rights in Guatemala. The context is one in which globalization and neo-liberal reforms have increasingly delinked law and the state, creating new forms of legal pluralism (e.g. international, national and 'local' law), new, non-judicial forms of dispute

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resolution, as well as fragmented patterns of legality. The judicialization of indigenous claims, as she points out, has sometimes led to cooptation and demobilization, and tends to fix ethnic categories by projecting an 'essentialized, idealised and atemporal indigenous identity'. Yet Sieder argues that the mere plurality of new legal forms, and especially the access to international legal norms and regulations, has also opened up opportunities for indigenous social movements to engage in 'counterhegemonic' forms of law-making that can challenge dominant interests within state and industry. Sieder emphasizes the unpredictability, instability and often cumulative effects of collective action, in this case regarding the formulation of legal frameworks that reflect alternative perspectives on the fundamental concepts of property, the person, community and choice. The transnational dimension again emerges as especially relevant here, giving indigenous activists the possibility of expanding the space for, and thereby the scope of, political action. Sieder notes the emergence of guidelines adopted by major international funding agencies, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, which seek to protect the interests of indigenous (and increasingly Afro-Latin) peoples. While these are 'soft' norms, not legally enforceable and of questionable status in terms of their impact on actual lending policy and project development, they nevertheless open avenues for claims and redress. Of interest here is the way 'law', broadly conceived, expands beyond the scope of the state: this develops an important dimension in ideas about how neo-liberalism links to multiculturalism and the promotion of cultural rights more widely.

Susanne Brandtstädter's paper focuses on struggles over the nature of peasants' citizenship in contemporary China, historically a Maoist administrative category created in conjunction with that of urbanites. Reform China instituted limited forms of 'grass roots' democracy, allowed peasants already in the late 1970s to engage in entrepreneurial activities, and touted 'governing through law' and 'citizen rights' as a clear break with the Maoist era of movement politics. At the same time, as Brandtstädter argues, neosocialism sought to cut off peasants from the political by re-culturalizing the peasant category as the modern nation's negative other, a politics that found its concrete expression in land grabs and the 'fate' of many so-called 'peasant-workers' as exploited, culturally despised, and semi-legalized 'immigrants' in China's cities. Focusing on the activities of rural rights defenders, Brandtstädter shows how these engage with the new discourse on law, civilization and citizenship in order to reject new exclusions and reclaim a collective political voice. What prevents their cooptation, also in the eyes of fellow peasants, is that they actively embrace 'peasantness' through maintaining their rural residence and bonding with other peasants, and

by demonstrating political sincerity in 'living simple' (*pusu*), a Maoist term that turned (certain) aspects of peasant culture into a general citizen ideal, and a radical critique of political corruption and the waste of public resources. Cultural fixation, on the other hand, is undermined by the valued citizen knowledge that formal]ly 'uneducated' peasants can demonstrate in skillfully engaging the law, and often winning cases against local governments in rural courts. Brandtstädter argues that culture becomes a ground for new forms of political mobilization in so far as it gives rise to grass roots collective action, solidarity and a shared experience of exclusion. On the other hand, it is precisely the appropriation of a (historically particular) 'universalist' citizen idiom as the language of law and rights, and practices that create links beyond 'traditional' boundaries of place and class – such as with journalists, academics, 'real' lawyers -- that challenge the cultural order of the authoritarian state and create space for transformative political action. Brandtstädter's essay indicates that the consolidation of 'culture' – in her case, phrased in non-ethnic terms – and its use as both a mechanism of governance and a ground for resistance and transformation are not confined to contexts in which neo-liberalism (and even less classic liberalism) are prima facie the dominant political-economic rationalities. Instead, the promotion of 'culture' clearly serves the purposes of a variety of modes of governance

While Hale's and Brandtstädter's papers foreground the importance of, in Charles Hale's terms, the 'impossible subject' as a place from which to launch a political and cultural critique of hegemonic states, the special issue concludes with a paper by Andrew Kipnis that focuses on the process of subjectification itself, central to all theories of governance and political action. Exploring the case of 'education for quality' in China, he questions the often too taken-for-granted assumption of a direct 'fit' between 'processes of subjectification that are articulated by governance agents and the types of subjects that are actually produced' within particular social contexts. This assumption is particularly evident among those who explore 'neo-liberal governmentality' and posit the emergence of a homogenous neo-liberal subject. In the case of Reform China, he shows that, under the slogan 'education for quality', educational strategies which aim to support the formation of a 'freer', creative and self-determined student subject sit uneasily with authoritarian discourses that demand subjection to a draconian examination regime as well as to the authority and 'truth' of the Party. These, in his view, cannot be reconciled, and do not provide a single coherent model of a citizen subject. 'Education for quality' is directly linked to the developmental aims of the reform state, and thus imbued by governing agents with a larger national agenda; *vice versa*, excelling in school or university is 'sold' in the dominant discourse as a form of patriotism

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asked of Chinese students. But Kipnis did not find much successful mobilization for 'hard work' among Chinese students for reasons of national development or patriotism. Rather the 'structured social relations' that most students were involved in at home and at school played a far greater role in the forming of student subjectivities. Relations with parents, for example, demanded studying hard as an expression of filial piety. Here again, governmental intentions to regulate subjectivities in favour of a particular national cultural project – the quality citizen, who does not challenge Party hegemony – are undercut by the exchanges, relations and practices that make up the *social* person and form particular identities. Rather like Glick-Schiller, Kipnis shows that people orient their goals towards family priorities, albeit the activities they pursue – business enterprises in the US, hard work in China – end up fitting in with agendas that are either neo-liberal in the US case or projects to create self-regulating subjects in the case of China. Like Brandtstädter, Kipnis indicates that these orientations can be the source of resistance against top-down processes of subjectification and ideological hierarchies (a 'fact' that all socialist states, united in their mistrust against the 'private' and the 'domestic', knew) . This again nuances the links that exist between neo-liberalism and the deployment of reified notions of collective culture. This special issue thus ends at the other end of the (neo-liberal) spectrum, the human individual. We conclude that cracks in existing hegemonies and alternative possibilities emerge through social engagement as a member of (and for) a particular collective -- not an abstract 'cultural community', but a community of meaning, praxis and emotional attachment.

Notes

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[1] The papers in this special issue arose out of a workshop held at the University of Manchester on 26-27 March 2007 (except for the paper by Andrew Kipnis, which was a later addition). The workshop was organised by Susanne Brandtstädter, Peter Wade and Kath Woodward. It was funded by the ESRC Centre for Research into Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC), based at the University of Manchester and the Open University (see http://www.cresc.ac.uk/). It was held under the aegis of CRESC's Theme 3, which focused on 'Culture, Governance and Citizenship: the Formation and Transformations of Liberal Government', coordinated by Professor Tony Bennett, Open University.
[2] This is the subject of an on-going research project by Evans. See http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/disciplines/socialanthropology/about/staff/evans/.

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