

Citizenship and
immigration
backbone of
exclusion politics
essay



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The concepts of citizen and immigrant have been discussed by many scholars for many reasons. These reasons can be the need of demonstrating the conflicts and the problems between citizens and immigrants, the immigrants' illegal status that have generally unbearable life and working conditions, otherness of immigrants and thus their exclusion from mainstream of the society. Calavita is one of the scholars indicating the significance of dichotomy concerning citizen and immigrant issue by gathering ideas of many scholars. Thus, the main objective of my paper is to indicate on what basis Calavita challenges the immigrant/citizen dichotomy and also to illustrate the crucial points I agree by making use of the articles of vital scholars such as Bosniak, Marshall, Didier, Turner, Soysal, Balibar, Silverstein, Castles and Davidson and Giordano.

The concept of citizenship not only refers to inclusion but also exclusion as it explicitly or implicitly posits the differences between citizens and immigrants who are generally considered as foreigners. Firstly, Calavita starts to challenge the immigrant/citizenship dichotomy by emphasizing the arguments of scholars concerning the differences between citizens and immigrants. For instance, Brubaker states that even though citizenship refers to inclusion, " it is externally exclusive" (21). Both Brubaker and Michael Walzer indicate a sharp difference between citizens who belong to the national community and noncitizens that do not. Thus, Calavita emphasizes that " the extensive empirical scholarship that shows exclusionary aspect of citizenship affirms immigrants as a distinctly marginal population as well" (403). Calavita also highlights " the marginality of illegal immigrants" by pointing out that they are given " the worst jobs" and " excluded from social

membership not only by virtue of their status as immigrants but by illegality” (403). Moreover, according to B. S. Turner, who gets citizenship explicitly shows “ the general criteria of inclusion/exclusion within a political community and how these resources following citizenship membership are allocated and administered largely determines the economic fate of individuals and families” (7). I totally agree with Calavita’s and Turner’s arguments because there are many countries which can demonstrate the social and economical exclusion of immigrants such as Great Britain, Germany, France and so on. For instance, In Great Britain, many immigrants from Iran, Brazil, Afghanistan, Iraq and so on, are generally deprived of safe working conditions with poor salaries and they are generally given the worst jobs which citizens of the country do not want to do. Moreover, they have to live in some campsites far away from the mainstream of the society as they cannot afford to pay the rent of ordinary houses. As they are not the citizens of the country, their jobs, living and working conditions are harsh on the basis of exclusion. What is more, the exclusionary nature of citizenship in England can refer to inequality. According to Marshall, citizenship has been a growing “ institution” in England associated with “ capitalism which is a system, not of equality but of inequality” (102). Therefore, it can be deduced that the exclusion of immigrants is not only the result of exclusionary nature of citizenship but also the strong desire of capitalist people who want to earn more by exploiting the illegal status of immigrants. Calavita continues her arguments concerning otherness and marginalization of immigrants by indicating Filipina domestic workers in Los Angeles and Rome as examples emphasized by Salazar Parren who argues that Filipinas confront “ sets of dislocations in Italy and the United States, despite the legal, political, and

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cultural differences of the two contexts, as they provide the gendered, low-wage labour on which global capitalism thrives” (404). As a result, capitalism has a crucial role in shaping the exclusion and economic marginalization of immigrants.

The rights of immigrants have been extended through the enforcement of the law. For instance in the European Union it is achieved through a common asylum and immigration policy which provides specific rights to immigrants in the European Union countries. Calavita similarly addresses “ the issue of formal citizenship in the United States and the legal rights that distinguish citizens from noncitizens” by utilizing Peter Schuck’s article which shows “ the evolution of the meaning of citizenship in U. S. immigration and naturalization law” (405). It is argued that the value of U. S. citizenship has been decreased because immigrants have gained “ increasing rights as the concept of universalistic human rights independent of citizenship has expanded” (405). Moreover, Yasemin Soysal states that “ rights that used to belong solely to nationals are now extended to foreign populations, thereby undermining the very basis of national citizenship” (190). Calavita and other scholars also points out “ universal human rights in democratic societies” which means that “ immigrants have come to enjoy virtually all the privileges associated with formal citizenship” (usually, but not always, with the exception of voting rights) (405). What is more, according to Linda Bosniak, rights and recognition should be given to all people “ who are territorially present within the geographical space of a national state by virtue of that presence” (390). This obviously refers to immigrants who territorially exist in many countries but denied. I agree with the opinions on

the gradual growth of immigrant's right not only in USA but also in Europe through the enforcement of the law. Thus, distinct terms have been created for the condition of immigrants such as "denizen" which is indicated by Soysal's article for foreigners who are long-term residents of European states and who have substantial rights and privileges (190). Calavita thus shows that "this concept of a membership continuum is at least implicitly shared by virtually all who write on immigration law and belonging" (406). But at times it is somewhat awkwardly accompanied by the enduring idea of a "conceptually clear, legally consequential, and ideologically charged distinction between citizens and foreigners" (Brubaker, 21). It can be considered as true assumption since the explicit differences between them can be still observed in many countries such as in Great Britain I illustrated above.

Different concepts such as "transnational citizenship," "global citizenship," and "post national citizenship" are raised in Calavita's article for further destabilizing this presumed dichotomy (Baubock 1994; Falk 1993; Bosniak 2000, 449). According to her, the establishment of the European Union and the appearance of European citizenship may be the "clearest example" for "transnational membership". "While the allocation of many formal citizenship rights to all Europeans in the European Union clearly extends the conventional state-centered concept of citizenship, this transnational form is still relatively rare" (406). Didier Bigo states that "it is vital to have a long-term economic and social policy on migration that provides for decent conditions of family unification, equal wages and pension rights, and cross-border movements facilitated by international agreements" (581). Thus, it

can be deduced that the concept of European citizenship and immigration policy provide advantages such as equal wages to the immigrants.

Furthermore, Calavita argues that “conceptual precision” is required “in our discussions of citizenship” yet we need “not define citizenship as intrinsically national in nature” (407). Therefore, it can be pointed out that the definition of citizenship cannot be something which is unchangeable yet which has been developed and extended through evolution as Bosniak acknowledges that “citizenship is multiple and overlapping” through “increasingly transterritorial quality of political and social life” (450). However, we need to emphasize that being citizen of a country does not necessarily mean that your rights are protected and you can defend yourself when you are treated unfairly, even citizens of a country can be deprived of “social, civil and political rights” as Calavita indicates (407).

“Racialized citizenship, cultural citizenship and dependent citizenship” are another crucial terms which are addressed by Calavita (407). These terms are the explicit illustration and proof of exclusionary nature of citizenship. To give an illustration, Paul Silverstein states that “the white aristocracy” think that they are “enactors of national will” and utilize “a nationalistic practice of exclusion on racialised Aboriginal and Asian cocitizens” and also in France “Muslims” are not seen as “French citizenship” since their culture is based on different religious activities (27). For describing the dependent citizenship, gender issue has a pivotal role as “women’s dependent citizenship” is observed in USA. (407). Calavita makes use of Bredbenner’s article concerning women’s “dependent citizenship” in USA through the Naturalization Act of 1855 (407). When foreign women married U. S. citizens,

“ law automatically conferred citizenship on foreign women” that “ protected these women from deportation and gave them inheritance Rights” yet “ deprived them of their native citizenship without their consent” (407-408).

Even though foreign men who married U. S. had acquired right to vote, these women who married U. S. men could not vote. This can be an exact proof of the dominance of patriarchy and the crucial clue indicating status of women as second class citizens in USA. According to Calavita, “ gender and race are often at the forefront of the struggle for inclusion” as we realize women position in USA in that times , Muslim’s condition in France and the otherness of Aborigines in Australia emphasized by Silverstein (408).

Being a citizenship is considered as “ first act to empower oneself against the environment into which one is born” and thus a citizen tries to find “ mastery over whatever pushes him or her back into subjection” (Castles and Davidson, 26). As a result, citizenship is inclined to indicate mastery over all environments which can be taken as the main result of capitalism. Calavita acknowledges that “ the ruled were dependent on the rulers, but the rulers no less depended on the ruled. The two sides were tied to each other and neither could easily opt out of the wedlock” (410). To give specific illustration, the capitalist employers want to give jobs to illegal immigrants in order to gain more profit by giving them poor salaries. The amount of money which the employers earn is thus relied on the employment of this ruled class. In addition, violence and crime against immigrants are another vital issue raised by Calavita by pointing out that “ in late August 2004, 11 homeless people were attacked in organized assaults in Sao Paulo, leaving at least 7 dead” (412). This can be considered as a cruel “ attempt to keep the

homeless out of public space" (412). As we can realize these scholars point out that "immigrants are marginalized and excluded from membership in the national community of citizen-insiders" yet this dichotomy is problematic-on one hand because immigrants are increasingly granted formal rights (412). As we can observe, the dichotomy addressed by Calavita constitutes contradictions and conflicts as it not only refer to exclusion and marginalization but also evolution of immigrant's rights.

In the second part of the paper, she maintains her argument with immigration policy in Italy which grants "victims of human trafficking temporary residence permits to escape from situations of violence and abuse" (Giordano, 588) and she suggests that the legal construction of marginality is here particularly seen. For example, "the immigrants are consistently found in the lowest paid, most precarious, and least secure jobs. It is estimated that 30% of non-EU immigrants in Italy work in the vast underground economy" and it is hard to "obtain permanent legal status through Immigration laws" (413). The illegal condition of them in Italy should be emphasized as illegality of immigrant workers is embedded in "Italian immigration law anchored by temporary and contingent permit systems" (413). Balibar states that "capacities of reception and integration are arbitrarily established according to criteria of cultural distance-that is, race" (37). Also, Calavita acknowledges that "immigrants are racialized and their cultures highlighted as problematically distinct, to the extent that they are economically other" which means that "ethnic and cultural difference" by themselves do not elicit racism, but rather their connection with poverty does (414). Thus, it can be said that race and gender are intertwined and so

are labour function and race. The concept of non-EU jobs offered to immigrants from third World countries clearly indicates degrees of economic marginality. As this is a legal process, “ Economic marginality is thus institutionalized through law” (415). They are also “ excluded from access to the national health care system”. Also, “ they experience illegal discrimination in the housing market” which causes them to live in “ homeless shelters and soup kitchens” (415). We can realize the mutual existence of economical, social and cultural exclusion of immigrants in Italy. According to her, if “ economic marginality” is backbone of “ immigrants’ exclusion”, then it shows the reason that “ other impoverished groups in highly stratified market societies are similarly denied full membership” (415). Thus, we can think that immigrants expose to both economic and social marginality. The workers, who are mostly young and woman and poorly paid, are too busy with their own survival to create solidarity among them.

An overall conclusion is that the first part of the paper confirms the traditional dichotomy concerning citizen-insider/immigrant-outsider and the distinction between them is tried to be described by ideas of different scholars which is relied on “ the nominal definition of citizenship applied to women and people of colour” (416). However, the Italian example indicates us that there is no exact and explicit boundary between citizens and immigrants and we can realize the economic marginality and otherness in the context of the racialization of Third World countries. However, it should be always remembered that even formal citizens can confront troubles from which immigrants can suffer and not all citizens are true members. Thus,

they can also share the sense of exclusion with immigrants. Calavita sums up what she challenges by pointing out that the scholars “ claiming the extension of immigrant’s rights and documenting the critical race theory and feminist expose’s of the limitations on substantive citizenship come from dramatically different theoretical positions and use various conceptualizations of citizenship” (409). Yet, the conventional dichotomy between citizen-members and immigrant-outsiders is all disrupted by them. As result, it can be totally wrong to draw explicit definitions for citizen and immigrant yet it should be realized that the exclusion of immigrants also come from their inability of being consumers in the global marketplace. Lastly, it should not been forgotten that nowadays both immigrants and citizens have been backbone of marginality and exclusion which stems from the inescapable result of the capitalist world.