

Rethinking Citizenship: New Voices in Euroculture

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A Bridge Too Far? Understanding the Limits of Cultural Citizenship

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Abstract

Does the introduction of culture into citizenship debates make them sufficiently concerned with contemporary issues of identity, recognition, and belonging, or is cultural citizenship still occupied with traditional notions of entitlements and obligations? From such a critical perspective, this paper will focus on presenting the theoretical and practical limitations of cultural citizenship in the European context. The evolution of citizenship in political, social, civic, and recently, cultural terms will be briefly presented to contextualize the inquiry. Using the works of Pakulski and Delanty, the notion of cultural citizenship will then be developed to highlight its focus on collective learning, symbolic presence, and the right to identity representation and propagation. Analysis of specific policies in place at the EU level will underline the heightened importance of culture in policy-making. Issues with the concept will be presented and analyzed, along with certain caveats. Works of Staiger, Bhandar, and Stevenson, among others, will furnish some major critiques of cultural citizenship. Ambiguity and uncertainty over meanings and definitions, nation-state maintaining its central role, viewing culture as static and spatially dislocated, questions over accommodating individual freedoms, and the term 'culture' being associated only with the 'minority' figure, are just some of the issues that will be analyzed in detail. Pragmatic yardsticks will be furnished for cultural citizenship to develop further towards fostering harmony and consensus in modern societies.

Keywords: European identity-formation; minority rights; cultural citizenship; caveats; recommendations

Introduction

A total of 31,860,000 foreign citizens currently reside in the 27 EU countries, making up more than 6.4% of the total population;¹ Germany and Spain harbor the largest number of foreigners in the population respectively.² While migration all over Europe has increased in recent years, southern European countries specially have had to bear an asymmetric burden of immigrants. Besides the obvious increased heterogeneity, an added layer of complexity is that most of these immigrants carry their original cultures and traditions with them, which clash with the national norms in European countries and pose challenges to citizenship regimes. Given these demographic changes, the integration of newcomers into European societies becomes a major issue. Models of citizenship and integration range from multiculturalism to assimilation, but whatever the case may be, the question on everyone's mind is whether or not 'cultural citizenship' can be the panacea for all ills. *Is the inclusion of culture into citizenship debates/policies/requirements enough to make them sufficiently focused on solving contemporary issues of identity, recognition, and belonging? Or is this entire paradigm doomed to fail since it cannot move away from traditional notions of entitlements and obligations that have engendered problems over identity and representation in the first place?* The central argument of this paper is that cultural citizenship, despite being a dynamic and inclusive concept, *still needs a lot of theoretical and practical homework before it can be implemented generally, as a new citizenship approach, and particularly, as a way to integrate minorities and immigrants within mainstream cultures.* Without understanding certain limitations, and moving beyond rhetoric and failed policies, cultural citizenship is a recipe for towards the integration of foreign residents and other minorities.

Contemporary flows of immigration into Europe have created new challenges due to the changes in the demographical, social, political, and cultural backgrounds of both the immigrants and the citizens of European states.³ The citizens and the state are in a situation where both, simultaneously, attempt and fail to seek solutions to their claims. A massive increase in global immigration due to technological advancements in communications and transportation, different cultural background of immigrants, the presence of 'inside out communities' where new incomers can live without exposure to the culture of the host society, and permanent settlement being the major goal of movers are just some of the factors that have shaped the issue. National societies have become more 'strange' and 'heterogeneous'⁴, and identities are now "increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiple across different (...) practices and positions."⁵ Combine that with low birth rates, aging populations, unavailability of labor, and the existence of a gap between lifestyles of native and immigrant populations in Europe, and the situation becomes even more explosive. An additional aspect is the interconnectivity of decision-making on transnational issues, such as environmental degradation, resource depletion, food security etc., at the global, and indeed at the EU level, where policy preferences of one member state can affect others. Moreover, there are fears of a cultural clash due to the heightened radical rightist rhetoric against immigrants.⁶ The effects of a weak, artificial and incoherent

¹ The Guardian, "Immigration to Europe: How many foreign citizens live in each country?," Guardian.co.uk, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2010/sep/07/immigration-europe-foreign-citizens> (accessed 6 May 2012).

² Ibid.

³ Liav Orgad, "Cultural 'Defence' of Nations: Cultural Citizenship in France, Germany and the Netherlands," *European Law Journal* 15, no. 6 (2009): 720.

⁴ René Cuperus, "The Populist Revolt Against Pseudo-Cosmopolitanism," 103.

⁵ Stuart Hall, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, 1996), 4.

⁶ Ibid., 720-722.

policy have already started to show; the killings in Norway, the *indignados* protests in Spain, and hateful remarks by various leaders in the EU towards the ‘others’ in these societies, are all intricately linked pieces of the European puzzle. European integration and immigration into Europe have put pressure on the self-understanding of Europeans. Identities now face multi-faceted challenges and contestations, and the increased connectivity has fostered responses ranging from indifference to acceptance to xenophobia.

All of these factors do not contribute positively towards the integration situation. There is a glaring disjuncture between everyday political practices and the models of democracy, citizenship and participation in Europe.⁷ Citizenship is too dynamic to be understood with unifying approaches. The political, social, and cultural structures of states and citizens are so diverse that it is nearly impossible to formulize frameworks that will work in every situation. Nonetheless, such efforts furnish important yardsticks, limitations and warnings that need to be kept in mind before new policies can be implemented. Culture enters this entire framework from a special position since it impacts upon citizens’ participatory opportunities within the economic and political spheres.⁸ While traditionally the focus of citizenship was on legality, rights, and obligations, recent changes in Europe have shifted it towards more substantive issues of agency, membership, inclusion, equality, recognition, representations, construction of meaning, and civic identity formation.⁹ Lastly, it is extremely important to note that modern day struggles for identity and representation are not focused on merely legal rights, in the sense of nationality or citizenship, but are essentially ‘citizenship struggles’ for a fairer treatment and representation in the society.¹⁰

This paper will tackle the issue at hand from a variety of perspectives. Defining a concept as problematic as cultural citizenship, and assessing its novelty and potential towards minority representation in a troubled European setting will be the main focus of the paper. A brief overview of the evolution of citizenship concepts in Europe will contextualize the debate through various lenses of inquiry, and hence pave way for the introduction of cultural citizenship as a theoretical framework. The EU’s focus on culture in recent years will also be the subject of this section. From there on, the paper will focus on presenting the limitations of such a broad concept. Problems and caveats, both from a theoretical and a pragmatic perspective, will be analyzed, so as to keep in mind the various challenges facing the decision-makers today. Of course, citizenship in Europe is a bigger debate, but this paper will only focus on challenging cultural citizenship’s claims towards minority representation and immigrant integration. Several recommendations, lastly, will try and fill the gaps in the citizenship debate, and strive to make cultural citizenship a concrete and more responsive notion towards solving the European dilemmas vis-à-vis immigration and integration of foreigners.

I. Evolution of Citizenship in Europe

⁷ Steven Robins, Andrea Cornwall, and Bettina Von Lieres, “Rethinking ‘Citizenship’ in the Postcolony,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 6 (2008): 1070.

⁸ Luke Goode, “Cultural citizenship online: the Internet and digital culture,” *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 5 (2010): 527.

⁹ Uta Staiger, “New agendas? Culture and citizenship in EU policy,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15, no. 1 (2009): 1.

¹⁰ Will Kymlicka, “Prospects for Multicultural Citizenship,” 3.

Any inquiry that tries to foster understanding of culture, citizenship, and the link between the two cannot be complete until the debate is contextualized within a historical setting. The way the European society works, the reasons incomers prefer certain countries, and the clashes between the lifestyles of natives and immigrant populations are all, in some way, functions of history. This section will strive to present a brief, but nonetheless, concise overview of the development of citizenship in Europe over the years that have shaped the contemporary situation.

1.a) European Society: The Present

Before embarking on this historical voyage, it would be informative to understand Europe as it is today first. René Boomkens, in his essay, has outlined certain dimensions of various highly developed European societies. At the cost of being reductionist, these dimensions can, however, inform our current inquiry greatly. According to Boomkens¹¹, modern European states are ‘knowledge societies’, whose culture and economy are greatly based on technology. Consequently, acquiring education and technological specialization play a dominant role in the society. Secondly, global and transnational influences (through media and communications) are shaping domestic policies and politics in European countries. Thirdly, migration, initially a relatively minor occurrence, is now an ever-present reality in European states. Lastly, for various historical reasons, the national cultures and politics in Europe have, indeed, become less hierarchical and more inclusive and pluralist. Added to that are McCormick’s characterizations of Europe as being comprised of remodeled identities, cosmopolitanism, communitarians, welfarism, development, rights and duties, secularism, civilian power, multilateralism, and multiculturalism.¹² Clarissa Hayward also sees a potential for a European identity through collective action with a view to promote social justice.¹³ However, Stevenson brings forth rising concerns about widespread public cynicism, drop in election turn-outs, and the rise in general disengagement from the political sphere¹⁴ which correspond to a lack of solidarity among European citizens. All of the dimensions mentioned above are indicative of the differences Europe has undergone and where it stands today, and hence will further our understanding about the cultural debate in citizenship policies.

1.b) A Brief Glimpse on History

The idea of European citizenship has always been a contested concept; its legal status and whether or not it can even be called ‘citizenship’ in the international legal sense of the concept are important contentions that still remain unsolved.¹⁵ While being mindful of the many variations of citizenship over the years, for the sake of brevity, this paper will only analyze the European citizenship envisioned by the EU in its current (and former) legal

¹¹ René Boomkens, “Cultural citizenship and real politics: the Dutch case,” *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 3 (2010): 314.

¹² John McCormick, *Europeanism* (Oxford: University Press, 2010).

¹³ Clarissa Rile Hayward, “Democracy’s Identity Problem: Is “Constitutional Patriotism” the Answer?,” *Constellations* 14, no. 2 (2007): 185.

¹⁴ Nick Stevenson, “Cultural citizenship, education and democracy: redefining the good society,” *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 3 (2010): 276.

¹⁵ Willem Maas, Migrants, states, and EU citizenship’s unfulfilled promise,” *Citizenship Studies* 12, no. 6 (2008): 585.

forms. The seeds of an idea as radical as a 'European' citizenship were first sowed when the founding fathers of European integration, such as Spinelli and Monnet, proposed a Europe where citizens could participate and in which their nationality played no role.¹⁶ They initially promoted a federal structure, with a strong role for the European Parliament, but due to lack of political will and a democratic deficit, a gradual and functional integration in certain economic sectors was applied. The idea was to improve the integration step by step through a spill over to other fields of politics. Later on, amid rising concerns about elitist politics, reform became necessary. The years 1976, 1979, 1981, 1992, 1997, 2000, and 2009 all mark important steps taken at various levels, election reforms and bestowing fundamental rights, for instance, to ensure an ever so expansive notion of European citizenship.¹⁷ The fallout of these changes stays with us till today. It is of importance to note, at this point, that the 'derivative' form of citizenship after the Maastricht Treaty was both clever enough to soothe down nationalist sentiments within member states, and insufficient enough to give European citizenship an 'invisible' dimension at the same time.

At the same time, a parallel process of harmonizing legislation affecting aliens in the context of free movement within the Community was also taking place. Despite multiple efforts to revive that process, this field of citizenship and integration in the EU remains rhetorically maximalist and politically minimalist. Arbitrary protection under the current directives, lack of consensus on basic definitions and responsibilities, and the protection of borders rather than individuals, are just some of the problems that have paralyzed the process. The initial proposals argued for increased free movement by abolishing internal border checks, and expanded this to include third country nationals as well.¹⁸ Deadlines were also set to harmonize the asylum and refugee policies; deadlines that still remain to be met. The problem with European citizenship is that it is still deeply attached to national citizenships; third country nationals are dependent upon naturalization processes which usually take several years and a certain degree of integration in the host state.¹⁹ Recent development like rising xenophobia against immigrants and insecure economic conditions are hardly conducive towards the integration of minorities in European societies. The question remains whether or not the EU, besides substituting for the nation-state, can also replace the sense of belonging that is traditionally attributed to the national community.

1. c) *Role of Culture*

Culture, as mentioned earlier, enters the citizenship debate from a very interesting angle. Not only is culture a powerful tool available to minorities and immigrants while voicing their concerns, its potential as a medium for spreading 'common' and 'shared' values among the citizens of the member states is also recognized by the EU. The EU policymakers have, therefore, shifted their focus from 'active' towards 'cultural' citizenship in the recent years. However, accommodating culture at the EU is easier said than done; not only do member states have different preferences and levels of acceptance vis-à-vis minorities and cultures, it also takes a lot of money and effort to start such an initiative in the first place. Cultural action at the European level, thus, has always been a sensitive issue.

¹⁶ Jo Leinen and Jan Kreutz, "The Evolution of a European Citizenship: From a Europe of States to a Europe of Citizens," *Social Europe* 1 (2007): 179.

¹⁷ Samantha Besson and Andre Utzinger, "Toward European Citizenship," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 39, no. 2 (2008): 190.

¹⁸ Willem Maas, "Migrants, states, and EU citizenship's unfulfilled promise," *Citizenship Studies* 12, no. 6 (2008): 586.

¹⁹ Samantha Besson and Andre Utzinger, "Toward European Citizenship," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 39, no. 2 (2008): 189.

Ever since the early 1970s, culture has been the subject of resolutions and declarations, but it must be noted that there are several constraints towards realizing the EU's potential for promoting cultural citizenship. Any initiative related to culture is subject to a unanimous vote in the Council, and it also must adhere strictly to the *subsidiary* principle, in addition to being exempt from legislative harmonization.²⁰ Furthermore, culture remains an over-determined and under-defined concept at the EU, receiving only 0.4% of the overall budget.²¹

Nonetheless, culture has slowly but surely progressed at the institutional level at the EU as the integration process has advanced, and there are very feeble hints of a European cultural policy. The 2001 Council of Europe Declaration on Cultural Diversity, the 2007 Communication on a European Agenda for culture in a globalizing world, the 2007-2013 'Europe for Citizens' program, and marking 2008 as the 'Year of Intercultural Dialogue', are all indicative of the fact that culture has finally caught the eye of the EU. This serves two purposes; not only does the EU discourse talk about integration of minorities and immigrants, but it also strives to further the integration agenda towards member states as well. In this context, culture becomes the primary facet of a shared past and values of the 'Europeans'. "Common cultural values and roots" are propounded as a key element of European identity and Union membership²², in an effort to induce solidarity among the people. The individual citizen is placed within a complex set of collective representations and identifications.²³ Culture and citizenship are then anchored in community membership, and are hence embedded in social practices and the way of life. European citizenship as 'cultural membership' is henceforth generated through this process.²⁴ To some, this process is reminiscent of the strategy of nation-building as a "system of cultural signification"²⁵, automatically producing haves and have-nots in the citizenship struggle. While cultural citizenship still remains a theoretically and practically underdeveloped notion, along with a lack of terminological precision and limited policy proposals at the EU²⁶, there is however a chance that one day it will come to pervade actual citizenship programs of the EU.

II. Cultural Citizenship: Introducing the Framework

The focus of the previous section has been to highlight the various historical contingencies that have shaped the face of European citizenship, and understand how culture is used/abused in official discourses at the EU level to give a sense of shared identity, and be the tool for inclusion and exclusion. This section of the paper will now delve deeper into cultural citizenship, and link the history with the present and the future. Certain factors, however, need to be reiterated. European citizenship, in its present sense, is still derivative

²⁰ Uta Staiger, "New agendas? Culture and citizenship in EU policy," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15, no. 1 (2009): 2-3.

²¹ Ibid., 4.

²² Ibid., 6-9.

²³ Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism: examining the politics of recognition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).

²⁴ Uta Staiger, "New agendas? Culture and citizenship in EU policy," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15, no. 1 (2009): 6.

²⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and narration* (London: Routledge, 1990).

²⁶ Uta Staiger, "New agendas? Culture and citizenship in EU policy," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15, no. 1 (2009): 9.

of national citizenships. While this might be a clever work-around by the EU to avoid any criticism about losing sovereignty from nationalist quarters, such a definition of citizenship effectively places the member states at the center of granting citizenship status and rights. Secondly, European citizenship has always been based on an inclusion-exclusion axis, where every change in citizenship regimes has created a set of winners and losers. Thirdly, while European societies can now be understood as more open, liberal, and pluralistic than in historical times, the fact remains that citizenship in the continent of Europe is still a fundamentally exclusionary concept. As Seyla Benhabib has pointed out, liberal democracies, on the one hand, are based on universal language of fundamental human rights, and free association and participation by the people, but on the other, they also erect clear and enforceable ideological and territorial boundaries of membership.²⁷ Determining who is included in the 'people' also implies an understanding of who is excluded. "The paradox of democratic legitimacy", as Benhabib calls it, makes liberal democracies "internally inclusive' while remaining 'externally exclusive.'"²⁸ Nonetheless, the capacity of the nation-state to regulate the domains of citizenship has weakened due to multiple factors such as the internationalization of labor markets, rise of transnational institutions, tension between normative principles, like equality, and the exclusionary policies of nation-states, and developments such as the codification of human rights in international law and regional integration.²⁹

Moreover, it is informative to start this discussion by understanding the concept of 'culture' itself first. An 'essentially contested concept'³⁰, culture has gone through many semiotic and theoretical changes, to the point where it often misguides rather than enlighten academic and public discussion.³¹ It comprises of everything and nothing simultaneously. Instead of trying to define culture (and starting an unending debate), we need to keep in mind Dick Stanley's discussion of the 'three facets of culture'. For him, culture is the repository of past traditions, symbols, and meanings in one place, and the making of new meanings in the other. Culture also acts as a set of symbolic tools for people to construct their way of life.³² Hence, whatever understanding of culture we might have in our minds, for the purpose of this essay, it is sufficient to note the role and agency culture provides to individuals and groups in reshaping contexts and meaning in their lives.

This is the context in which cultural citizenship enters the scenario, and strives to set right all that is wrong in citizenship regimes. The challenge is not only to allow for a more pluralistic citizenship at an institutional level, but to also transform the nature and scope of the citizenship concept. Cultural citizenship communicates some kind of link between culture and citizenship. And while there may be an infinite number of ways to link culture to citizenship, this view, more importantly, brings citizenship into an entirely new domain different from its classic conceptualizations by inferring that citizenship has other than merely political connotations.³³ Instituting cultural citizenship is another way of coping with the tragedies of modern citizenship.³⁴ It must be noted though that it is not the only concept with the aim of incorporating 'difference' in modern societies. Multiple efforts

²⁷ Seyla Benhabib, *Transformation of Citizenship: Dilemmas of the Nation-State in the Era of Globalization* (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 2001).

²⁸ Marc Morjé Howard, "Comparative Citizenship: An Agenda for Cross-National Research," *Perspectives on Politics* 4, no. 3 (2006).

²⁹ Bjorn Hettne, "The fate of citizenship in post-Westphalia," *Citizenship Studies* 4, no. 1 (2000).

³⁰ Walter Bryce Gallie, "Essentially contested concepts," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56 (1956): 167-198.

³¹ Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, "Cultural citizenship as a normative notion for activist practices," *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 3 (2010): 321.

³² Caroline Andrew, Monica Gattinger, and M. Sharon Jeannotte, *Accounting for Culture: Thinking Through Cultural Citizenship* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2005).

³³ Judith Vega and Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, "The agendas of cultural citizenship: a political-theoretical exercise," *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 3 (2010): 245.

³⁴ Jan Pakulski, "Cultural Citizenship," *Citizenship Studies* 1, no. 2 (1997): 73-86.

have been made previously to alleviate the pains of those left outside the citizenship circles; 'active citizenship' made famous by the EU before the shift to cultural citizenship³⁵, 'multicultural citizenship' of Kymlicka³⁶, 'differentiated citizenship' of Iris Marion Young³⁷, and 'radical democratic citizenship' of Chantal Mouffe³⁸, are all valuable efforts in this regard. It can also be seen as an expansion of Thomas H. Marshall's approach³⁹, where cultural rights can be understood as the extension of citizenship, beyond civil, social, and political rights. Cultural citizenship, hence, instead of being the brainchild of a single mind, is a combination of multiple approaches taken by different authors who are aware of the background of European citizenship.

According to Jan Pakulski, a founding voice in cultural citizenship, the idea comprises of "the right to be different, to re-value stigmatized identities, to embrace openly and legitimately hitherto marginalized lifestyles and to propagate them without hindrance."⁴⁰ The discourses of citizenship, for Pakulski, have expanded into a field that is distinct from the legal and socio-economic dimensions.⁴¹ As such, cultural citizenship implicitly revolves around the recognition of three sets of rights: *the right to symbolic presence and visibility, the right to dignifying representation, and the right to propagation of identity and maintenance of lifestyles*.⁴² Social struggles are seen to be carried out in the symbolic field, where 'access to meaning' is the source of new kinds of power, and consequently, conflicts.⁴³ Cultural citizenship has been more concerned with issues related to respect and recognition.⁴⁴ Not only does it include the formal processes of citizenship such as voting and participation in civil society, but it goes one step further and crucially involves questions about whose practices are marginalized and rendered invisible.⁴⁵ Previous debates have concentrated mainly over giving significant weight to legal rights and responsibilities. Such a focus does not recognize that the cultural rights and opportunities of groups are fundamental to debates about participation now. Cultural citizenship is about a return to principles of democratic processes and reviving the public sphere.⁴⁶ Contemporary conflicts are struggles over identity, access to sources of information and knowledge, and the right to create new meanings.⁴⁷ Cultural citizenship argues for the ability to participate in the policy while being respected and not reduced to the 'Other', and finding ways of dialogue that are inclusive of marginalized voices is critical to such processes. In this sense, relating questions of entitlement and duty to the diversity of cultures within everyday life, and the relationship between symbolic societies and the practice of politics are crucial towards a more

³⁵ Alan France, Jo Meredith, and Adriana Sandu, "Youth Culture and Citizenship in Multicultural Britain," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 15, no. 3 (2007): 309.

³⁶ Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: a liberal theory of minority rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

³⁷ Mesut Yegen, "The dialectic and the tragedy of citizenship," *European Political Science* 7 (2008): 101.

³⁸ Chantal Mouffe, *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism and Citizenship* (London: Verso, 1992).

³⁹ Thomas Humphrey Marshall, *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁴⁰ Jan Pakulski, "Cultural Citizenship," *Citizenship Studies* 1, no. 2 (1997): 73-86.

⁴¹ Jan Lofstrom, "Historical apologies as acts of symbolic inclusion and exclusion? Reflections on institutional apologies as politics of cultural citizenship," *Citizenship Studies* 15, no. 1 (2011): 96.

⁴² Jan Pakulski, "Cultural Citizenship," *Citizenship Studies* 1, no. 2 (1997): 73-86.

⁴³ Alberto Melucci, *The playing self: person and meaning in the planetary society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 144.

⁴⁴ Nick Stevenson, *Culture and Citizenship* (London: SAGE, 2001).

⁴⁵ Nick Stevenson, "Cultural Citizenship, education and democracy: redefining the good society," *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 3 (2010): 276.

⁴⁶ Alan France, Jo Meredith, and Adriana Sandu, "Youth Culture and Citizenship in Multicultural Britain," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 15, no. 3 (2007): 309.

⁴⁷ Gerard Delanty, "Two conceptions of cultural citizenship: a review of recent literature on culture and citizenship," *The Global Review of Ethno-Politics* 1, no. 3 (2002): 60-66.

responsive and responsible view of citizenship.⁴⁸ The politics of everyday life for minorities is the struggle to participate actively and resourcefully in the cultural field, and to make their voice heard through civil action.⁴⁹ Thus, in addition to the civic and social rights of minorities, cultural citizenship adds a layer of cultural rights to the discourse.

Cultural citizenship has been a positive innovation in that it has drawn attention to the respect for people's cultural identity as one of the prerequisites for a 'full-scale' citizenship.⁵⁰ For Gerard Delanty, citizenship as a concept has expanded after the addition of different global and cosmopolitan dimensions, and now it has a big impact on the cultural processes of a society.⁵¹ Consequently, the problem of inclusion has become more acute and pronounced as it now involves problematic aspects such as culture and identity, along with traditional rights and duties.⁵² There is a visible shift in emphasizing recognition of difference over the preoccupation with equality in contemporary literature.⁵³ For this reason, Delanty argues for collective avenues of learning vis-à-vis engagement in the civil society. Learning, for Delanty, takes place at multiple levels, and hence entails an inherent reflexivity, where the learner (individual, group, or a society) is empowered with the capacity to reproduce meanings and symbols for itself. This is a two-way process, where the learner simultaneously learns new things, and then places him/her within the already present cultural context. Hence, the 'processual' nature of learning that signifies "movement rather than finality" suggests a cultural turn in citizenship for Delanty. This is the context in which cultural citizenship must be located, for citizenship is now increasingly seen as something that must be *learnt*. The advantage of theorizing cultural citizenship 'as a learning process' is that it "shifts the focus of citizenship away" from membership of a polity "onto common experiences, cognitive processes, forms of cultural translation and discourses of empowerment."⁵⁴ Citizenship is a matter of participation in the everyday political life of the community through both formal and informal processes. Moreover, this view also empowers people in their own self-understanding, sense of belonging and identity.⁵⁵ However, for van Hensbroek, the idea of cultural citizenship needs a higher level of institutional, social and attitudinal elaboration, since cultural citizenship involves a wide array of practices which may require "institutional and motivational foundations."⁵⁶ Nonetheless, cultural citizenship tries innovative approaches to tackle all important aspects regarding citizenship.

III. Limitations of Cultural Citizenship

⁴⁸ Nick Stevenson, *Cultural Citizenship: cosmopolitan questions* (Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press, 2003).

⁴⁹ May Joseph, *Nomadic identities: the performance of citizenship* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

⁵⁰ Jan Lofstrom, "Historical apologies as acts of symbolic inclusion and exclusion? Reflections on institutional apologies as politics of cultural citizenship," *Citizenship Studies* 15, no. 1 (2011): 96.

⁵¹ Gerard Delanty, "Citizenship as a learning process: disciplinary citizenship versus cultural citizenship," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 22, no. 6 (2003): 597.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Alain Touraine, *Can we live together? Equality and difference* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000).

⁵⁴ Gerard Delanty, "Citizenship as a learning process: disciplinary citizenship versus cultural citizenship," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 22, no. 6 (2003): 600.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 602-604.

⁵⁶ Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, "Cultural citizenship as a normative notion for activist practices," *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 3 (2010): 326.

Cultural citizenship, so far, looks like the ideal panacea for all ills plaguing Europe. It is responsive, inclusive, and collective. It strives to include a cultural element to citizenship that would open up new ways for minorities to voice their opinion in the mainstream national culture. But is it enough? Will it actually prove to be the solution, or is it a bridge too far? As van Hensbroek puts it, can it be a better conceptual vehicle for formulating protest against cultural oppression and exclusion than the classical views?⁵⁷ The thesis held in this paper, *does the introduction of culture in citizenship debates make them sufficiently focused on solving contemporary issues of identity, recognition, and belonging, or is cultural citizenship still occupied with traditional notions of entitlements and obligations* will be tackled here. Through analyzing contemporary literature and applying existing tests/approaches to cultural citizenship, the purpose of this inquiry is not to reject the notion, but rather to attach crucial caveats to the concept of cultural citizenship in order to make it more responsive towards the integration of minorities.

To start with, we must keep in mind Chatterjee's contentions about the conflict of making the universal in line with the particular.⁵⁸ He notes that there is an inherent conflict between the universal ideals of individual freedoms and equal rights, and the particular demands of cultural identity; Benhabib also has the same concerns, where she poses the inherent tension between a universalist conception of citizenship with uniform rights and duties, and the particular demands of people.⁵⁹ It is as if there is no alternative but to opt for either assimilation or group fetishism⁶⁰. Cultural citizenship needs to move away from the rhetoric of assimilation, and to strike a balance of its own between ideology and actual practice for envisioning democratic institutions and processes.

Secondly, cultural citizenship builds on an assumption of weakened national citizenship regimes. It envisions a transnational notion of citizenship, and perhaps ignores the fact that the nation-state is still a very important contender in the arena of citizenship. Of course, the nation-state has lost its central place, and nowadays faces challenges through a double pressure: from above through globalization, and from below in the form of an ethnic diversity that can no longer be dissolved into the imagined community of the nation.⁶¹ And true that the various economic, organizational, military, legal and cultural processes and structures have eroded the state's power⁶², but it still enjoys the lion's share of authority, especially when it comes to granting citizenship, integration regimes and immigration issues. Underestimating the nation-state's role is, hence, a fatal error for cultural citizenship.

Another fear plagues the notion of relocating and localizing decision-making, which is another hallmark of cultural citizenship. There are no obvious reasons for presuming that relocating governmental control will foster a more horizontal and accountable relationship between the citizens and the state.⁶³ Decentralization of power, in practice, may serve to extend and further embed state patronage, since rather than encouraging forms of liberal citizenship, it might generate new forms of dependency by placing the government in close

⁵⁷ Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, "Cultural citizenship as a normative notion for activist practices," *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 3 (2010): 326.

⁵⁸ Partha Chatterjee, *The politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

⁵⁹ Seyla Benhabib, *Transformation of Citizenship: Dilemmas of the Nation-State in the Era of Globalization* (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 2001).

⁶⁰ Mesut Yegen, "The dialectic and the tragedy of citizenship," *European Political Science* 7 (2008): 98.

⁶¹ Zygmunt Bauman, "The Demons of an Open Society," in *Globalization and the State: Sociological Perspectives on the State of the State*, ed. Willem Schinkel (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 150-177.

⁶² Willem Schinkel, *Globalization and the State: Sociological Perspectives on the State of the State* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

⁶³ Steven Robins, Andrea Cornwall, and Bettina Von Lieres, "Rethinking 'Citizenship' in the Postcolony," *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 6 (2008): 1077.

proximity to the demos.⁶⁴ Cultural citizenship remains highly ambiguous with regards to its potential for state abuse through strict control of cultural policy.

The European project so far has seen very low public involvement and interest in engaging with the EU, and this trend can continue and make cultural citizenship a potential failure. Just because there are avenues for participation does not automatically mean that people will participate; citizens might have different affiliations and relate with other social institutions more than they do with the altruistic ‘civil society.’ It is wishful thinking to imagine that everyone in the ‘civil society’ will participate in the cultural project. Cultural citizenship, like its other counterparts, strives to reframe citizenship in more active terms through processes of engagement. As appealing as that may sound, such processes do not always result in the acquisition of new identities and roles. As some suggest, the nature of relations between citizens and state in political and historical contexts is marked by histories of disenfranchisement and authoritarianism⁶⁵, and new versions of citizenship might not be amenable to such dramatic ruptures with the past. The so-called ‘new democratic spaces’ might reproduce existing relationships of power. In other words, making civil society more ‘active’ will not create an automatic association between itself and democratization; civil society is always only as democratizing as its members.⁶⁶ In a similar way, pertaining to Delanty’s work, his focus on civil society has generated criticism, since the spaces that foster civil society are also avenues for elite cultural competencies and aspirations; also, taking into account various spatial contexts, civil society can come to be understood as the object rather than the motor of democratization.⁶⁷

Moreover, cultural citizenship, as discussed earlier in the essay, is geared towards inclusion of minorities into the host society without giving up their own identity. But this prompts the question: *into what do these immigrants, foreigners, and third-country nationals integrate?* This thinking is in line with Acosta’s work.⁶⁸ Such a critique is relevant because there is an assumption here about the existence of an “already well-integrated and homogenous society” that fails to take into account the difference of opinion present within European society, and tries to employ unifying discourses over what is essentially different and unique.⁶⁹ Such an assumption just simply does not hold true in theory and in practice, and is a major cause for cultural citizenship’s failure to engage critically in the diverse European setting of today.

If we extend this previous point, it might be logical to ask: where do the *intra-group* differences go, once cultural citizenship has been realized as a political reality? Even after the recognition of culture as a critical part of minority identity and citizenship debates, there is still a fear about the repression of personal freedoms within minority groups. The possibility of majority concerns taking prevalence over individual freedoms will only serve to reproduce the existing tensions in societies. Cultural identity, hence, is represented as static, and these representations “hold persons forever captive in their group memberships.”⁷⁰ As Stevenson notes, cultural citizenship loses its potential when there is

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Steven Robins, Andrea Cornwall, and Bettina Von Lieres, “Rethinking ‘Citizenship’ in the Postcolony,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 6 (2008): 1077.

⁶⁶ Neera Chandhoke, *The Concepts of Civil Society* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁶⁷ Steven Robins, Andrea Cornwall, and Bettina Von Lieres, “Rethinking ‘Citizenship’ in the Postcolony,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 6 (2008): 1081-1083.

⁶⁸ Diego Acosta, “A Belief in the Purity of the Nation: The Possible Dangers of Its Influence on Migration Legislation in Europe,” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 10, no. 2 (2010): 238.

⁶⁹ Sergio Carrera, *In Search of the Perfect Citizen? The Intersection between Integration, Immigration, and Nationality in the EU* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009).

⁷⁰ Eugenia Siapera, “Multiculturalism online: the internet and the dilemmas of multicultural politics,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, no. 1 (2006): 5-24.

an ascription of “a culture” to “a people.”⁷¹ Consequently, the problem arises with the definition of the ‘group’ itself⁷², and the entire inclusion-exclusion debate is produced again. The likelihood of the repression of the intra-group differences and freedoms is a major hurdle for cultural citizenship to become a viable solution, and it needs to be addressed.

Cris Shore, a leading critic of European cultural policy, sees such attempts by the EU as an expansion of its competences and eroding state sovereignty in favor of ‘more occupied’ fields of government. For Shore, any attempt by the EU to create a cultural policy is “a project of social engineering uncomfortably reminiscent of other failed modernist ideologies of the twentieth century.”⁷³ Such contentions, no matter how radical, are important while considering cultural citizenship’s potential to be the solution for solving the integration troubles of Europe, since they raise important questions about identity-construction and self-understanding of Europeans.

Uta Staiger has highlighted some very important concerns pertaining to cultural citizenship. In her view, cultural citizenship, despite its positive connotations, remains highly broad, vague, and ambiguous. Secondly, the term itself is “embedded in a discourse which utilized a plethora of conservative watchwords – taking for granted the existence of an underlying European culture and identity.”⁷⁴ This effectively means that cultural citizenship, instead of introducing new and radical notions to undo social justices, still relies on traditional views of citizenship, and hence remains crippled with all the previous drawbacks of such concepts. Moreover, there is a fear among academics that the recognition of difference also might ‘culturalize’ the terminology. What it means is that ‘culture’ seems to have become co-extensive with identity and difference alike.⁷⁵ Injustices, then, are understood as cultural, and presumed to be rooted in social representations and interpretation.⁷⁶ Even though the EU discourse marks a shift from homogeneity to diversity, it remains static in its definition of cultural specificity, and binds the European *demos* together in an essentially incoherent and weak identity.

Lastly, Davina Bhandar, a leading voice towards understanding the limitations of cultural citizenship, has two major issues with the concept. Firstly, she contends that cultural paradigms render cultures extremely static, and spatially dislocated, which gives them a false ‘transnational’ look.⁷⁷ Such a view might lead policymakers to think that cultures take place outside their spatial contexts, and stay unchanged over periods of time. As is evident, such a view can be potentially harmful to the already worsened situation with minorities and other marginalized groups. For her, cultural citizenship falls henceforth into an “ontological trap”, where cultural difference is essentially ‘ontologized’, overlooking multiple cultures and a variety of practices and seeing them as one demographic reality.⁷⁸ Culture is presented as an entity that is highly abstracted from the practices of daily life. Moreover, she is particularly worried about how the term ‘cultural’ has become synonymous with the minority figure, and mulls over the homogenization of cultural identity and the ascription of particular “values and proclivities onto minority cultural

⁷¹ Nick Stevenson, *Cultural Citizenship: cosmopolitan questions* (Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press, 2003).

⁷² Mesut Yegen, “The dialectic and the tragedy of citizenship,” *European Political Science* 7 (2008): 106.

⁷³ Cris Shore, “‘In uno plures’ (?) EU cultural policy and the governance of Europe,” *Cultural Analysis* 5 (2006):10.

⁷⁴ Uta Staiger, “New agendas? Culture and citizenship in EU policy,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15, no. 1 (2009): 7.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or recognition?: a political-philosophical exchange* (London: Verso, 2003), 6.

⁷⁷ Davina Bhandar, “Cultural politics: disciplining citizenship,” *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 3 (2010): 332.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 339.

groups.”⁷⁹ According to Bhandar, culture has to be understood as materially situated within the living practices of the everyday, and not based in “abstract projections.”⁸⁰ If her contentions are not addressed, cultural citizenship might turn out to be the same old dish in a new dressing.

In the end, cultural citizenship is too broad in what it conveys and says too little in what can be politically delivered.⁸¹ The idea here is to not to throw the baby away with the bathwater, but to rather understand the workings of the notion better. Keeping in mind the limitations of the concept will help us move beyond rhetoric, and save us from repeating the mistakes of the past. Minority groups and immigrants now form a big percentage of the European population, and are vital for diversity and inclusion in European societies; hence, they deserve to be given at least this much attention.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The current situation of integration and involvement of immigrants in the European Union, as examined above, looks rather bleak. However, scholars, academics and practitioners alike are working hard to ensure a better situation in the future. The primary purpose of any discourse over cultural citizenship should be to highlight responsibility, the acknowledgement of difference, inclusion in policymaking, and, increased interaction in the community with the aim of building participatory public life.⁸² The ideal of a cosmopolitan Europe has to be kept in mind before starting any reform. Moreover, forms of effective democratic participation should complement procedural legitimacy in the EU, and citizens should play an authorial as well as an editorial role in citizenship policy.⁸³

The EU also should make a bigger effort of propagating solidarity among citizens through various media, educational programs, and political workshops, where citizens come together and learn about the workings, and more importantly, the advantages of a cosmopolitan Europe. Collective learning has to be based on equity and equal rights. Spaces for socialization have to be promoted. Conditions for social and institutional integration need to take into account different demands and different contexts.⁸⁴ Instead of imposing unifying and homogenizing approaches for different societies and groups, a differentiated approach can be really helpful to engage minority groups within the mainstream society.⁸⁵ What should be explored further in the context of citizenship are the “productive capacities of culture.”⁸⁶, and culture has to be recognized as an empowering agency, especially towards minority groups and immigrants.⁸⁷ Regressive cultural practices that respond to the demands of the polity can be brought forth, where a more beneficial

⁷⁹ Ibid., 340

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 341.

⁸² Davina Bhandar, “Cultural politics: disciplining citizenship,” *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 3 (2010): 341.

⁸³ Manos Papazoglou, “Assessing models of citizenship in the EU: the idea of responsive citizenship,” *Citizenship Studies* 14, no.2 (2010): 229.

⁸⁴ Benjamin Zufiaurre, “Social inclusion and multicultural perspectives in Spain: three case studies in northern Spain,” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 9, no. 2 (2006): 414.

⁸⁵ Liav Orgad, “Cultural ‘Defence’ of Nations: Cultural Citizenship in France, Germany and the Netherlands,” *European Law Journal* 15, no. 6 (2009): 720.

⁸⁶ Davina Bhandar, “Cultural politics: disciplining citizenship,” *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 3 (2010): 341.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

outlook would be to locate cultural practices in-between the two extremes of universality and particularity.

It is necessary to provide avenues for cultural citizenship to challenge the hegemony of the state in the political, social and economic fields. The sources of unity in democratic states (participation in civil society, collective learning etc.) should be identified and propagated. Citizens tend to act on issues close to them, both emotionally and spatially. A participatory notion of citizenship, henceforth, must start from “particular places and issues” that people find invigorating.⁸⁸ A more transparent, understandable, approachable and representative EU should be the starting point, where people understand the need for their participation at a transnational level. Voting in the European elections can be more stringently tied to various rights, and consequently, to European citizenship as well. Cultural citizenship can definitely help, but the limitations need to be kept in mind. The purpose of a debate over cultural citizenship should not be to make it conform to some form or shape, but to rather inform our inquiries and make us challenge structures of power and find agency within our cultural practices.

We must come to terms with a view of citizenship that embraces the “wider transformative struggles around the polity’s reconfiguration.”⁸⁹ Europe can no longer proceed with its previous attitudes, and crucial steps have to be taken to make decision-making more collective. Cultural citizenship, then, can become an important means of cognitive transformation of self and other, and hence contribute towards reducing xenophobia in the society by giving voice to personal identities, rather than unifying groups into collectivities; it would also empower the minorities and immigrants through their own self-understanding and sense of belonging and identity.⁹⁰

This paper set out with the aim of inquiring thoroughly into the notion of cultural citizenship, and finding out what it actually promises for the notions of citizenship in Europe. Various aspects of the debate have been highlighted and analyzed. European citizenship as a normative concept, cultural citizenship as a theoretical framework, and the caveats associated with both have been amply highlighted. Surely experts will find better ways to look at the same question, and propose better solutions too. But what remains to be seen is whether or not policymakers at the national and the EU level will take these considerations into account while developing policies regarding immigration and integration of minorities. Much work, though, still remains. Nonetheless, it can only be hoped that future generations of academics and policymakers alike will benefit from such research, and will be better informed about making critical decisions that will affect not only them, but also the generations to come as well.

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⁸⁸ Steven Robins, Andrea Cornwall, and Bettina Von Lieres, “Rethinking ‘Citizenship’ in the Postcolony,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 6 (2008): 1080.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Gerard Delanty, “Citizenship as a learning process: disciplinary citizenship versus cultural citizenship,” *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 22, no. 6 (2003): 604.

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