The Public Policy Role of Citizenship in a Globalized World

Howard Duncan
Executive Head, Metropolis Project

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Despite the apparent setbacks to multilateralism in international diplomacy that we witnessed in the lead-up to the 2003 war in Iraq, we continue to live in a highly-connected international community that is relentlessly forging high levels of transnational activity. Multilateral trade agreements, multilateral human rights agreements, the advantage to which people use contemporary communications and transportation technologies to do business and exchange ides, all these and more indicate that the drive towards greater global integration continues apace, at least for those able and interested. Never before have so many been able to think of themselves as citizens of the world and to realize a portion of this attitude in their daily lives. This aspect of globalization, the growing global integration of ordinary people and the remarkable convergence of the ideas and attitudes that they bring forth, prompts questions about the role of national citizenship in the modern world.

It is now commonplace to note the ease with which one can simultaneously think oneself a member of two or more societies. Fast and cheap transportation allows one to live in two far-removed homes with comparative ease. Modern communications technologies allow one to be fully abreast of the goings-on and to take part in the culture and political life of one's other home. Direct printing of daily newspapers from an ocean away is now routine, as is watching distant local television via satellite. This means that not only can the business traveler maintain constant contact with his home and home office both, but that an immigrant living, say in Vancouver, can readily partake of much of daily life in the original homeland, say in Hong Kong. The transnational flow of goods, services, people, and ideas has resulted in two phenomena that I want to emphasize in this brief essay, strengthening transnational communities and a growing tendency towards universal human rights. Both these effects of globalization, if I may use this term so loosely, challenge our traditional understanding of national citizenship.

Transnational communities are important from a citizenship point of view because of the strong and frequent ties that their members maintain with their country of origin, ties manifest not only in the interactions between the two communities but in the holding of dual citizenship.[1] Members of strong transnational communities might have no intention of supplanting their attachment to the homeland with an attachment to their new society, in contrast with what was considered the norm for immigrants in the days when communications with the home community were far less frequent and travel a major and costly endeavour. As a consequence, one's sense of attachment and belonging can be divided between two societies, as can one's allegiances and loyalties. The Canadian oath of citizenship[2] incorporates a swearing of allegiance that presumes a singularity of this allegiance. Further, the Canadian concept of citizenship, bound up with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Multiculturalism Act, and other such pieces of legislation and policies designed to foster inclusiveness, expresses the expectation that new citizens will assume full membership in Canadian society and regard Canada as their home, their primary if not their sole home. This expectation is being met with less frequency as newcomers to Canada, like immigrants throughout the world, can more easily have dual or multiple places of belonging, and, further, as native-borne Canadians increasingly see their home as extending well beyond our political borders.

One reason that it is easier to feel part of the world beyond one's national borders is the expansion of a familiar governance model, the expansion of liberal democracy, the expansion of a set of familiar human and political rights. Travel is easier and cheaper not only from technological advances but from a lowering of legislative and administrative barriers. For a Canadian to spend time in the United States, most of Europe, Australasia and many other countries produces no abrupt change, and it is relatively simple to be at ease or to feel at home. Not only do human and political rights seem to be gradually converging towards a universal norm, some countries including Canada are extending these rights and some entitlements to their non-citizen residents.

Extension of rights and entitlements to non-citizens, in some cases upon immediate arrival, has in the minds of some people diminished the value of citizenship to little more than the right to vote and to hold a passport. Moreover, in some countries, non-citizens now have limited voting rights, for example, in municipal elections. In addition, passports, being travel documents, needn't necessarily be tied to citizenship, and the existence of dual citizenship might allow one to travel on the passport of one's country of origin.[3] Admittedly, national citizens living or travelling abroad may be afforded a degree of protection and assistance from their governments, something that stateless persons might envy, but the need for such protection is rare and we have seen a growing support to extend such protection to landed immigrants as well.[4]

What some envision, then, is an eventual decline into irrelevancy of national citizenship regimes with a concomitant ascendancy of some form of world citizenship or regional (for example, European Union) citizenship. At the same time, we are witnessing, in Canada and elsewhere, much more attention being directed towards the ideas of shared citizenship, or societal

membership, or social inclusion, ideas of common principles of social justice that apply to both citizens and non-citizen residents.

Although I do not expect to see national citizenship actually decline into irrelevancy or nostalgia, these trends do raise the question *of the remaining role of legal citizenship as an instrument of public policy*. In an environment of near-equal access to rights by citizen and non-citizen, where immigrants retain stronger ties to the homeland for longer periods of time regardless of whether they take on national citizenship, where even native borne citizens feel an ever widening sense of belonging across the globe, what is left for citizenship to do in the public realm? What remains of its public policy role? What do contemporary governments hope to achieve through the legal instrument of citizenship?

The history of national citizenship regimes illustrates the strong public policy role that they once played. Rooted in the distinction between member and non-member (think, at one extreme, of the slave), citizenship afforded rights and privileges simply unavailable to the non-citizen, societal goods that precluded a life on equal terms with a society's full members. The extension of the offer of citizenship to immigrants marked not only a symbolic welcome but a tangible set of social and personal benefits. No longer, however, can Western societies segregate their members from others with the impunity of the past.[5] Where governments once, as a matter of public policy, distinguished citizens from non-citizens and offered less by way of rights and entitlements and demanded less by way of duties (such as military service), governments now with fewer exceptions offer and demand the same of citizens and non-citizens. Further, some of the special demands on citizens, notably allegiance, may well be less realistic given the proliferation of dual citizenship and, potentially, multiple allegiances. Citizenship once connoted a special attachment; does this continue to have a place in our globalized world?

Citizenship once connoted a special attachment; does this continue to have a place in our globalized world? The answer would appear to be yes.

Despite the social forces to which I have alluded above, the answer would appear to be yes. Consider the continued demand for legal citizenship. 85% of immigrants to Canada become legal citizens, something that requires not only an expression of allegiance and commitment, but a certain amount of effort which is required to prepare for and pass a citizenship test. This demand suggests that Canadian citizenship has value in itself. It is not just access to passports, for, again, many new citizens continue to carry the passports of their country of origin, which allows them to travel internationally just as easily as if they carried a Canadian passport. Perhaps the reasons align with the contemporary interest in the more broadly elaborated concept of "shared citizenship", a notion of social inclusion to be extended to all residents, citizen or not. Sharing citizenship is to share with all members of a society the basic rights, benefits, and entitlements that full members, citizens, possess. Full membership is to be extended to all residents from considerations of social justice and a sense of the universality of human rights. But of notable importance is *the extension of membership* in society to all, the offer of a sense of belonging to a society whether one is an immigrant or refugee, whether one is a member of an ethnic, racial, or religious minority, no matter one's sex or sexual orientation, whether one is disabled, aboriginal, and so on. Implicit in the concept of shared citizenship is the value that most people place upon membership.[6]

Is the contemporary public policy role of legal citizenship, then, to be founded on the value of officially sanctioned membership in a society? Canadian citizenship is conferred through public ceremonies of accomplishment, of welcome, and of acceptance by the new citizen of the responsibilities that come with the new legal status. Citizenship ceremonies place considerable emphasis on the immigrant joining Canadian society, joining the Canadian family. In some of the ceremonies that I have witnessed, participation in, for example, the political process, in one's community life, in the school system, in the voluntary sector, is portrayed as a consequence *of becoming a member*. In these public acts of being granted and being seen to accept Canadian citizenship, the prime message is now one of membership, and this has enormous symbolic importance.

But is this enough to afford the concept of legal citizenship a significant public policy role? It all depends upon whether doing so makes a tangible and sufficient difference. Canada, like many countries, is trying to foster a strong sense of national identity in the face of globalization, an identity that more and more is grounded in the multicultural nature of our population and less and less in the history of the founding people of Canada, the aboriginal, the English, and the French. A multicultural identity, in order to form the basis of a single national identity must, one might argue, be accompanied by a force of cohesion, especially in an environment of strong identity politics. It may not be sufficient for the majority to grant to the multiplicity of minorities the same rights as enjoyed by all under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Multiculturalism Act, and so on. Without a strong message of the offer of citizenship and of full societal membership and without the concomitant acceptance of this membership and the responsibilities that it carries, a national identity may be more difficult to come by.[7] More importantly, without this message a fractured society may be all the more difficult to avoid. A vibrant citizenship policy that encourages all Canadians, including those born here, to understand and to adopt the values that Canadian citizenship implies, that expects all to accept the principle of full societal membership for all citizens, might well have tangible effects. For a national citizenship regime to carry this off, however, may require it to wear an even more public face than it now does, to display more prominently the rights, duties, and societal benefits that flow from it.

I occasionally think back to the civics classes that I endured in school. Am I merely being nostalgic, or am I recollecting a useful means of expressing public policy?

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Faulkner text – footnotes

1. By the noun "public" I mean in English what the ancient Romans referred to in their noun "publicum"—that is to say, an aggregation of human beings who never actually see each other face to face but are nonetheless expected to try to make decisions in common that could transform them into a community.
2. Cosmos and History. The myth of the eternal return Willard R. Trask, trans. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row, 1959)
3. New Haven : Yale University Press, 1952.
4. For a lucid summary and application of Gerbner's views see James Shanahan & Michael Morgan, Television and its Viewers. Cultivation theory & research (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
5. Television and its Viewers, p. 219.
6. Citizens and Nation: an essay on history, communication, and Canada (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 2000).
7. See the argument in Thomas Luckmann, The Invisible Religion: the problem of religion in modern society (New York, Macmillan, 1967).

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Frith text – references

1. Source: Valerie Knowles, Forging our Legacy, Canadian Citizenship and Immigration, 1900-1977, published by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2000

Giroux text – références

1. Voir les travaux de T.H MARSHALL, « Citizenship and Social Class » dans (1963) Sociology at the Crossroads and Other Essays, Londres, Heinemenn, p.67 - 127. Pour une critique, voir M. BULMER et A. M. REES, Citizenship today : The contemporary Relvance of T.H. Marshall, Bristol, University of California Press,1996. Voir aussi M. COUTU, «Introduction : droits fondamentaux et citoyenneté » dans M. COUTU, P. BOSSET, C. GENDRREAU, D. VILLENEUVE (dir),Droits fondamentaux et citoyenneté, Une citoyenneté fragmentée, limitée ou illusoire ? , Montréal, éditions Thémis, 2000, p. 1 - 20.
2. Voir P. GUIBENTIF, « Approaching the Production of Law through Habermas' Concept of Communicative Action" (1994) 20 Philosophy and Social Criticism, 45-70. à la p. 59.
3. Voir D. LEYDET, « Patriotisme constitutionnel et identité nationale » tel que cité dans M. COUTU, « Citoyenneté et légitimité. Le patriotisme constitutionnel comme fondement de la référence identitaire », à la p. 637.
4. En se situant ici dans une perspective sociologique et non juridique.
5. Voir G. BOURQUE et J. DUCHASTEL, L'identité fragmentée. Nations et citoyenneté dans les débats constitutionnels canadiens, Montréal, Fides, 1996.
6. cf. A.C. CAIRNS, "The Fragmentation of Canadian Citizenship", dans Alan C. Cairns, Reconfigurations. Canadian Citizenship and Constitutional Change, Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1995, pp. 157-185).
7. C. TAYLOR, »Convergences et divergences des valeurs entre le Québec et le Canada» dans C. TAYLOR, Rapprocher les solitudes. Écrits sur le fédéralisme et le nationalisme au Canada, Québec, Presses de l'université Laval, 1992, p.179.
8. I. M. YOUNG, «Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship» dans C. SUNSTEIN (dir.), Feminism & Political Theory, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989, p.117.
9. F. AUDIGIER, «Concept de base et compétences-clés de l'éducation à la citoyenneté démocratique : une première synthèse », Séminaire Concept de base et compétences clés, Conseil de l'Europe, document DECS/CIT (98) 7, 1997. à la p. 7.
10. M. COUTU, «Introduction : droits fondamentaux et citoyenneté », dans M. COUTU , P. BOSSET, C. GENDREAU et D. VILLENEUVE (dir.), Droits fondamentaux et citoyenneté. Une citoyenneté fragmentée, limitée ou illusoire ? Montréal, éditions Thémis, 2000.
11. Voir W. KYMLICKA et W. NORMAN, «Return of the Citizens : A survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory», (1994) 104 Ethics 352.
12. M. LABELLE et D. SALÉE, «La citoyenneté en question : l'État canadien face à l'immigration et à la diversité nationale et culturelle», (1999) 31 Sociologie et Sociétés 125, à la p. 141.

Rummens text – bibliography

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Duncan text – footnotes

1. There is no conceptual reason to limit ourselves to two communities or to dual citizenship. Multiple citizenships are quite conceivable and multiple transnational communities exist in the form of well-established diaspora, such as the Jewish diaspora.
2. "I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen." (From the Citizenship Act)
3. Some of which, one must acknowledge, have more value than others.
4. Citizenship regimes afford governments the ability to deport non-citizens for certain criminal acts. Deportation is a good deal more difficult, although not impossible, for naturalized immigrants.
5. One might argue that the reaction of some governments to the September 11, 2001 attack on New York and Washington have brought at least a partial return to a much differentiated society, differentiated along citizenship lines in part. There is some evidence for this, but I would suggest that this is a temporary anomaly whose impact will diminish in turn in the face of the relentless features of globalization.
6. Of course, an important aspect of shared citizenship is to seek greater assurance of the equality of opportunity, of freedom from discrimination, of freedom from deep poverty, etc.
7. Note the current concerns of some European countries of maintaining their national identities in the face of the increasingly multicultural nature of their populations. Note, too, that Canadian policy requires new citizens to have a minimum proficiency in one of Canada's official languages