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FROM PROBLEMS OF CITIZENSHIP TO QUESTIONS OF ACTION

By

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A thesis submitted to the  
Graduate School-New Brunswick  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

Graduate Program in Geography

written under the direction of

James DeFilippis

and approved by

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New Brunswick, New Jersey

October, 2012

## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

From Problems of Citizenship to Questions of Action

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This thesis is a methodological evaluation of the question – or problem – of citizenship that explores this concept’s limits, the consequences of citizenship’s overextension, and the potential of an alternative question of action for political inquiry. Through this process, the thesis intervenes within citizenship studies’ dominant theoretical concerns with the everyday and the constitutive other, asserting that they both maintain the citizen as the defining term of the political. It argues that this conceptualization of politics is produced by the question of citizenship, and is expressed in its assumptions of separation that reduce political action to citizenship. In contrast, a question of action provides an alternative engagement with politics by limiting the concept of citizenship itself to avoid defining the political and action through this term. The conclusion briefly explores posing a question of action and enumerates some potential research avenues for its actualization.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The contents of this thesis exceed my individual contribution. Intellectually, the geography department at Rutgers University has provided an encouraging and vibrant community within which to engage geography for the first time and find my place within the discipline. Seminars with Kevin St. Martin, Liz Grosz, and Bob Lake initiated the theoretical exploration that became this thesis, which largely builds on the idea that there are no “things” but only process. Kathe Newman and Bob provided invaluable feedback and insight on the proposals and interview guides I wrote for this project and also an NSF proposal. The thesis may seem quite different from some of the conversations we had, however those meetings pushed my research, writing, and thinking to be more clear and coherent, which hopefully comes through in this work. In addition to continually pushing my research in these essential ways already mentioned, James DeFilippis provided the intellectual space within which to explore the questions that interested me, responding with enthusiasm and encouragement no matter how far I may have drifted from his own work. For me, this seems to be the most important quality in an advisor.

I would also like to thank Ann Stamp Miller, Jean Kachiga, and John Whitmer who developed my interest in academic work and encouraged/guided my pursuit of graduate studies in a university culture where this was not the norm.

Beyond faculty, the graduate students at Rutgers formed an invigorating community within which to begin this journey into academia. Among other things, a reading group with Eric, Nate, Sean, and Katie provided an initial reason to engage Nietzsche and productive conversations that were uniquely fulfilling for their self-

organization and lack of immediate usefulness. Rich Nisa was the source of innumerable conversations about all things related to my work, his work, being a grad student, and music. Realizing that many graduate students are not as fortunate as I have been with supportive programs and committee members I am truly grateful to have spent my last two years here.

While this thesis is theoretical, its original impetus lies in empirical research and involvement with workers centers in New Jersey. My involvement at one center was during a crucial time in my studies when I was forming the idea for this thesis. The work they do and struggles they undertake pushed me to engage citizenship literature and its conceptualization of politics that they implicitly challenge. I hope to have conceptually elaborated some of the challenges that they pose to this literature and citizenship more generally.

In addition to these intellectual influences, my family has been a source of emotional support and encouragement, even while they may not fully understand what I do. This is especially true of Michelle Huynh will now be through two moves and continues to keep my work habits in check. Thank you.

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## Introduction

This focuses on a small, but I think significant, subplot in the story of social theory. It seeks to develop a geography of critique and engagement able to meet the political as well as analytic challenge posed by the 'new times'... The core of the paper [is] therefore... to develop a framework able not only to grasp the complexities of economic restructuring and cultural realignment but also to reconstruct the moral project of the 'old' Left.

As critique, this rights-based perspective gives insight into the structuring of social relations through the constitutional and statutory entitlements conferred on (and exercised by) the residents of particular nation-states. It offers a conceptualization of categories like 'race', class, gender and locality which accounts for their variable realization in space and time, without losing sight of the individuals whose lives they permeate. The prescriptive content of this framework revives the social role of the State, and offers a vision for the transformation of society through a shift to participatory democracy effected through the mobilization of locality. *Citizenship theory thus has practical as well as analytical relevance.* It helps explain the structuring of society, but it also provides some normative principles to guide the restructuring of society. It promises, then, one route towards a human geography for the new times.<sup>1</sup>

In 1989, these remarks closed the Susan Smith paper “Society, Space and Citizenship: A Human Geography for the ‘New Times’?.” This paper called for a new citizenship research agenda that challenged both the hegemonic market liberalism of the “New Right” and the detachment of radical geography’s foundationalist theory from political practice. As the above quote demonstrates, citizenship’s conceptual potential was its dual functionality as an analytic and normative tool for practical change. The argument was therefore that a framework focused on citizenship could function to both analyze asymmetrical power relations in society, and also make practical claims based on normative ideas about how such a society should be. In geography, this citizenship-

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<sup>1</sup> Susan J. Smith, “Society, Space and Citizenship: A Human Geography for the ‘New Times’?,”

framed research gained steam throughout the 1990's and was sometimes accompanied by similar calls for a greater geographic engagement with citizenship, a call that has perhaps best taken up recently by immigration and urban studies literature.<sup>2</sup>

Eleven years after the Smith paper, a review article on citizenship and immigration studies provided another, quite different, agenda for citizenship research.<sup>3</sup> Having defined citizenship as legal status, rights, identity, and participation, Irene Bloemraad suggested that the concept of “citizenship as participation” was a potential avenue for future research through a focus on the “dynamic interaction between the individual and the state.”<sup>4</sup> She argued that this was an important focus because it not only conceives participation normatively, as Smith emphasized, but also concerns the ways that participation is *already* citizenship. Thus “citizenship as participation” is one way of thinking citizenship beyond legal status, and as such, it provided an under researched move forward for citizenship studies in 2000. The agenda of citizenship research therefore continued to develop and carry its force.

Lastly, in 2007 Engin Isin and Bryan Turner proposed another agenda for citizenship studies.<sup>5</sup> This time instead of focusing on the idea of participation, they proposed a greater focus on the characteristics of “rights” and “duties.” In this move they suggested that human rights must take a structural cue from national citizenship and

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<sup>2</sup> Joe Painter and Chris Philo, “Spaces of Citizenship: An Introduction,” *Political Geography* 14, no. 2 (February 1995): 107–120; This editorial by Painter and Philo was part of a special issue on geography and citizenship that was published almost simultaneously with another special issue on citizenship and geography edited by Sallie Marston and Lynn Staeheli, eds., “Citizenship,” *Environment and Planning A* 26, no. 6 (1994): 835–1000. These special issues demonstrate the growing relevance of citizenship as a research agenda in geography at the time.

<sup>3</sup> Irene Bloemraad, “Citizenship and Immigration a Current Review,” *Journal of International Migration and Integration / Revue De L'integration Et De La Migration Internationale* 1 (March 2000): 9–37.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Engin F. Isin and Bryan S. Turner, “Investigating Citizenship: An Agenda for Citizenship Studies,” *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 1 (February 2007): 5–17.



require material obligations that would then increase its enforcement and meaning. To do this, they proposed a cosmopolitan mobility, goods, and services tax as a way to add a material obligation to the abstraction of human rights.

Yet, while these examples demonstrate the inevitable change of citizenship research over the years, they also demonstrate that its analytical and normative force has continued to be the impetus for much of this work. Thus for Bloemraad, participation is an analytically broader and more effective way to research citizenship that allows for greater normative claims upon the nation-state. While for Isin and Turner, the model of citizenship attests to the analytical necessity of the nation-state within a globalizing world that also provides a way to claim and deepen cosmopolitan human rights. In all three of these cases, and citizenship studies more generally, the analytic and normative capacities of citizenship not only propel it as a framing device, but also reinforce and create its own validity in this role. What I mean is that by assuming these two characteristics, citizenship studies both operationalizes, reinforces, and usually expands the analytical and normative power of its research agenda. This is the use of citizenship engaged by this thesis, and it corresponds to at least two more assumptions within the citizenship research agenda: prioritization and proliferation. Thus utilizing the analytic potential of citizenship requires *prioritizing* citizenship in a research project, which tends to then actually conceive it as the privileged subject within politics.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, its normative elevation pushes for more of it, which often gives citizenship an implied or explicit goal of the *proliferation*.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> By actually I mean that citizenship becomes more than a research and heuristic device and instead conceives the citizen as the most important political actor.

<sup>7</sup> However, these assumptions that I have been dealing with are often not as distinct and clear as I have presented them. They often mix and intertwine within literature. Thus an article may posit that in order to properly analyze citizenship we must proliferate citizenship and not only see it in the legal relation between the individual and the nation-state but in its performance in the everyday live and communities that people are part of. This then leads to the reverse claim that because citizenship already exists in everyday realities

Yet despite the resilience of these imperatives, there is something about them and their veracity that begs for investigation. The status of these assumptions therefore necessitate that citizenship as a research agenda and framing device be evaluated and considered next to alternative questions, framings, and assumptions with which we might undertake research or think about politics. That is the project of this thesis, to evaluate citizenship as an analytically and normatively privileged agenda of research and pose an alternative question of action as an independent yet necessary concern for citizenship studies.

## I: Questions as Objects of Inquiry

This thesis studies “questions” rather than a “populations” or “groups,” as is common within many social sciences. This calls for some explanation. To some degree this thesis takes its starting point from Deleuze in his explication of Bergson’s method of intuition in which he claims, “stating a problem is not simply uncovering, but inventing.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, as Deleuze elaborates, the statement of a question or the positing of a problem is indeed just as important if not more so than trying to find a solution. What this means is that “problems,” and the questions that arise from them, may themselves be objects of investigation, which is the first step in Bergson’s method of intuition.<sup>9</sup>

Such an approach to research is an especially crucial starting point when researching politics and issues of legal status, inclusion/exclusion, and the “right to have

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that they require a more just reflection in the structures and functioning of institutionalized and formal forms of governance, or the state. In these regards, there is the potential for a slippage between the analytic and the normative characteristics of the citizenship research agenda. Yet though they may not always be apparent in these terms that I have used they are generally prevalent within the literature.

<sup>8</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone, 1990), 15.

<sup>9</sup> I develop this reading of Bergson by Deleuze in much more detail in the third chapter on the question of action.

rights.” There is indeed much current literature around this problematic of inclusion/exclusion and in some form it usually ends up saying that inclusion and exclusion are mutually constitutive, meaning that noncitizens are not in fact “excluded” from society, though they do not have citizenship in the fullest sense of the term.<sup>10</sup> From this problematic in the traditional liberal-democratic form of citizenship, it is usually suggested that we need to rethink citizenship in some way, whether it be institutionally formalizing citizenship as a status of degree rather than a strict either/or,<sup>11</sup> extending the “soft” inclusive inside,<sup>12</sup> or thinking of citizenship as an “act” rather than a status.<sup>13</sup> Yet, what I identified earlier as the analytic and normative impetus of the “question of citizenship” is present within the most cutting edge elements of this research. In a variety of ways, the claim is still that citizenship should be analytically privileged and normatively proliferated. What I am suggesting by making a question my object of inquiry is that rethinking citizenship itself is not adequate, rather we need to evaluate the posing of the problem and the concomitant “question of citizenship” within which it is situated.

### ***The question of citizenship***

The “question of citizenship” is a broad and clunky attempt to formulate an object of study out of the immeasurably large, and equally diverse, body of research on

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<sup>10</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 1st ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Linda Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership* (Princeton University Press, 2008); Elizabeth F. Cohen, *Semi-Citizenship in Democratic Politics*, 1st ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Engin F. Isin, *Being Political: Genealogies of Citizenship*, 1st ed. (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Cohen, *Semi-Citizenship in Democratic Politics*.

<sup>12</sup> Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien*.

<sup>13</sup> Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen, eds., *Acts of Citizenship* (New York: Zed Books, 2008).

citizenship. However problematic it may be, such a broad stroke seems necessary in order to coherently make an argument. Though I must say that the intention of this project is *not* a critique of citizenship literature. Thus I hope that my reduction of citizenship literature is justified in the fact that its aim is to be a productive rather than critical move. In fact, all movement besides the totality of movement requires some form of reduction.<sup>14</sup>

When posed, the question of citizenship often asks who has citizenship? what does it mean? how is it created? And where is it located? Yet, the goal of my reduction of these questions to “the question of citizenship” is to evaluate the assumptions within this question and to explore their limits. My first chapter does this by setting up the problematic of inclusion/exclusion in which the formation of a community of citizens necessitates the exclusion of those outside of this community. As this has been a common point of concern, I explore the ways that citizenship theory has sought to overcome this problematic in order to reveal three assumptions that seem inevitable within a citizenship question, even when concerned with this limit of exclusion. I term these three presuppositions the assumptions of separation. In light of these assumptions within the question of citizenship, the rest of my thesis attempts to find a way to pose an alternative question of action that is concerned with how action occurs and how it becomes political.

### ***The question of action***

By posing a “question of action” I hope to open up the necessary space for creating an alternative framework, agenda, or assumption(s) within which to conduct research. In some ways this is an attempt to bring the thought of Nietzsche and Bergson to bear on political theory and more particularly citizenship. I do this by implicitly

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<sup>14</sup> Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books, 1988).

focusing on the two similar concepts that they provide of Will to Power and Élan Vital, which are something like continually differentiating forces. These concepts, and the idea of a singular differentiating force, provide an alternative “framework” or assumed starting point within which we may resituate citizenship as one aspect or symptom of this movement rather than a privileged point of investigation. My second chapter therefore develops a concept of struggle within which we may situate our research, explore, and think about the conditions of politics. It does this by exploring how struggle has often been conceived within the Marxist geography and then seeks to elaborate an alternative conception of struggle-as-growth.

Having elaborated an alternative “framework” within which to situate our research, I turn towards the issue of how this might affect the types of questions we ask. Suggesting that a more productive question to ask is one of action rather than citizenship, I contend that when subsumed within the question of citizenship, action is reduced to participation. The third chapter therefore disentangles the question of action from citizenship and seeks to posit it as an independent yet necessary question for citizenship research. It concludes by suggesting that a focus on the role of the body within the production of space provides one entry point into investigating the question of action and thinking about political becoming.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, given its traditionally subordinated status as a question of political significance, the question of action seems to provide some unused potential for thinking about politics.

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<sup>15</sup> This simultaneously refocuses and limits the privilege of subjectivity in political inquiry. For contrasting views on space, politics, and subjectivity see: Mustafa Dikeç, “Space, Politics, and the Political,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23, no. 2 (2005): 171 – 188; Keith Woodward, John Paul Jones III, and Sallie A Marston, “The Politics of Autonomous Space,” *Progress in Human Geography* 36, no. 2 (April 1, 2012): 204–224.

## II: Questions as Conclusions of Inquiry

The goal of this inquiry is to ask a better question. In doing this, I undertake an experimental project that seeks to test the viability of my arguments. Thus, I am interested in what could happen if we pose a question of action rather than a question of citizenship. If instead of asking who has citizenship? what does it mean? how is it created? And where is it located?... we ask how does action occur? how does it become autonomous? how does it become political? I am not really sure what will come from this question though I do think it has the potential to be carried out in a variety of ways, including a greater engagement with the thinkers utilized in this thesis and also empirical work that will likely problematize and compliment its various arguments.

This thesis is therefore the beginning and outlining of a project that could take an innumerable amount of trajectories as I continue my education. Further, Its usefulness will hopefully become more apparent as I continue to progress in my studies and revise, edit, and throw out the arguments that I make in the pages to follow. In the mean time, the most I can hope for is to bring together some thought provoking ideas for the citizenship literature that I am largely engaging.

## III: A Methodological Note

While the majority of this thesis relies on theory and texts in its analysis, I had the immense privilege and pleasure of conducting fieldwork with two workers centers in New Jersey. This fieldwork consisted of four semi-structured interviews with staff and one focus group with active members. Given the limited amount of fieldwork I was able to conduct in my short amount of time as a master's student, I have had to limit my use of

this research largely to examples of the theoretical argument that I construct throughout. This is undoubtedly a limit of the argument that this thesis undertakes, though as I hope to demonstrate, all of our concepts, methods, and questions have limits. The goal however should be to recognize those limits and not overextend them rather disregard something simply because it is limited.

However, while this research is not the forefront of my argument, my involvement with these groups and observation of their organization were formative of this project as a whole. They inspired and informed the questions of this thesis as their work presented a challenge I could not ignore to the literature I was reading in school. While theoretical, this thesis is empirically grounded in these observations.

## Chapter I: The Question of Citizenship

The concept of citizenship inspires a vast and often overwhelming body literature. From strict legal accounts on the relation between an individual and the state to affective notions of belonging, it seems as though no aspect of this idea is left unturned. However, despite this diversity of citizenship theories, its essential ideas seem to boil down to something like inclusion (belonging) and equality. These two characteristics define citizenship as they are assumed, debated, and frame the discussion in citizenship studies. Within this framework of inclusion and equality, liberal, republican, communitarian, and cosmopolitan theories of citizenship have debated the appropriate size of community, the importance of individual protection, distributive justice, and the necessary procedures that can guarantee inclusion. Yet, within the history of this debates' legitimate differences, it often feels like a continuous oscillation between the two poles of the individual and the community.<sup>16</sup> Thus while conceptions of inclusion and equality change within the debate, it often revolves around the degree of prioritization afforded to the individual or community, inevitably landing on a spectrum between these two poles.

The orthodox narrative of citizenship's historical development attributes this individual-community spectrum to the classical era and the contrasting models of Greek and Roman citizenship. The first part of this chapter will focus on this narrative as I explore how it sets up current assumptions about citizenship and politics, which I term the assumptions of separation. For my purposes, the most important effect of these

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<sup>16</sup> This tension drives John Dewey's work on the public in which he claims that their supposed antithetical relation is a result of method rather than an a priori fact, John Dewey, *The Public & Its Problems*, 1st ed. (Athens, OH: Swallow Press, 1954), 187.



assumptions is the perceived divide between the citizen/noncitizen that parallel conceptions of inclusion/exclusion in the political sphere. These assumed divides frame the second movement of this chapter that explores modern theories of citizenship and the way that assumptions of separation have been developed, halted, and diverted through the evolution of citizenship theory. I do not provide a comprehensive review of citizenship theory. Instead, I focus on how these theories conceptualize the citizen/noncitizen divide and their potential for overcoming this very divide they assume. In other words, I will evaluate their potential for thinking about the ways noncitizens may participate and act politically. I am concerned with the limits of the concept of citizenship.

## **I: Assumptions of Separation**

The limits of citizenship have been a recent focus of critical and normative scholarship and it is this issue that has largely driven the research of this thesis. Through this focus a fairly common observation has formed and been elaborated from a diversity of perspectives, that noncitizens are not excluded from political processes but partake in a variety of different ways. Such attempts at overcoming the citizen/noncitizen divide have included a focus on subjectivity and the mutual constitution of inclusion and exclusion,<sup>17</sup> citizenship as an issue of degree rather than a strict either/or,<sup>18</sup> and the ways that non-citizens affect and participate in political processes through organizing efforts.<sup>19</sup> Situating

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<sup>17</sup> Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien*; Isin, *Being Political*; Anna Secor, “‘There Is an Istanbul That Belongs to Me’: Citizenship, Space, and Identity in the City,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94, no. 2 (June 2004): 352–368.

<sup>18</sup> Cohen, *Semi-Citizenship in Democratic Politics*; Lynn Staeheli, “Machines Without Operators and Genealogies Without People: Comments on Engin Isin’s *Being Political*,” *Political Geography* 24, no. 3 (2005): 349–353.

<sup>19</sup> Janice Fine, *Worker Centers: Organizing Communities at the Edge of the Dream* (Ithaca: Ilr Pr, 2006); Jennifer Gordon, *Suburban Sweatshops: The Fight for Immigrant Rights* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of

this thesis within this literature, I focus on *how* these approaches have moved beyond the divide of citizen/noncitizen rather than simply *if* they can do it. To do this, I will first set up the assumptions of separation that condition a problematic of inclusion/exclusion and then seek to outline the various potential that different approaches have for overcoming such a problematic.

Three assumptions of separation within citizenship are:

- 1) There is a separation between political and apolitical spheres
- 2) Citizenship is an addition to the body that bridges this separation
- 3) The citizen is the primary political actor

The first assumption is by no means an original insight. In fact, it is the foundation of the public/private binary that is often contested by feminist thought.<sup>20</sup> While drawing from this critique, my engagement with the assumed separation between the political and apolitical spheres, will instead pivot on theories of space. This may appear to be a tenuous move as work on public space and the city identify them as the site of politics, which ostensibly challenges my assertion that they contain an assumed separation between the political and apolitical. However, this literature often limits the political potential of space by only considering it as a site where ideals of citizenship (such as deliberation, difference, community, agonistic struggle, protest, etc...) may be enacted. While this work makes space the site of political participation, it is a participation that transcends space and the multiplicity of ways it is produced.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, I will explore the politics

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Harvard University Press, 2007); Monica W. Varsanyi, "The Paradox of Contemporary Immigrant Political Mobilization: Organized Labor, Undocumented Migrants, and Electoral Participation in Los Angeles," *Antipode* 37, no. 4 (2005): 775–795.

<sup>20</sup> Joan B. Landes, ed., *Feminism, the Public and the Private* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1998).

<sup>21</sup> By "transcending" space I mean that this idea of participation does not concern space per se. Rather, it is more concerned with such things as the formation of political subjects or political processes. In this way space becomes a means for the *real* politics of discussion and deliberation rather than the production of space itself as taking on the same political status. To take basic example, think of a fairly common

within space and its production, which is akin to the conditions of politics and fundamentally *more* than political concepts of action such as citizenship.<sup>22</sup>

If the political sphere is thought to transcend space, creating a gap between the political and apolitical, the second assumption that I have enumerated addresses the way that this gap is bridged, through the addition of citizenship. In exploring this assumption I will continue to think about the production of space as political, but now I will specifically focus on the role of the body in the production of space. This exploration will eventually draw from the philosophy of Henri Bergson and Henri Lefebvre in hopes of convincing the reader that citizenship is not an addition to the body but is rather conditioned by the intellect, which reduces reality and its multiple processes by orienting the body towards action. Citizenship as a reduction rather than addition will therefore create greater potential for considering ways beyond citizenship for acting politically. Meaning that we may recognize more modes of political action when the body is thought to inhabit the excess that is political, rather than separated from a transcendental political sphere.

Lastly, the third assumption I deal with is the primacy of the citizen as *the* political actor, making it the defining term of the political. Logically following the previous assumptions, this claim is that having bridged the gap to the political sphere, the citizen is politically most important. I will engage this assumption by considering difference within political action, meaning I will ask what different forms of action are

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statement like “we need public space for democracy.” Within such a statement democracy is the transcendent object or process that can only be reached through the means of public space. Though this is a spatial idea, it is only concerned with space to the extent that it relates to or maybe “grounds” transcendent processes of deliberation, conflict, and democracy

<sup>22</sup> Dikeç, “Space, Politics, and the Political”; Woodward, Jones III, and Marston, “The Politics of Autonomous Space.”

political outside of citizenship and how are they accorded importance? Part of this journey will include an evaluation of participation and human association within democracy. However, to get to this point, I must first investigate how these assumptions have expressed themselves within the question of citizenship.

## II: Antiquated Antithesis

The orthodox history of citizenship begins by comparing and contrasting its development in Greece and Rome. Within this story the conclusion ends up being that Greek conceptions of citizenship emphasized the participation of citizens in the governing process, and the rational deliberation it undertook, while Roman conceptions emphasized the status of its citizens and the protections that the state provides to them.<sup>23</sup> Within this spectrum of participation and status that the narrative sets up, we can see many of the debates within modern citizenship theory breakdown along parallel poles that include community-individual, obligations-rights, public-private, etc... Within this mode of thought then, these multiple and parallel spectrums tend to be read as two opposing ends in which the real practices of governments fall somewhere in between. The tension being that movement towards one end of the spectrum simultaneously moves away from the other end, for example, the more that participation and community is encouraged the less that the rights and status of the individual will be created and protected.<sup>24</sup> While such an approach may be helpful for making sense of policy and

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<sup>23</sup> J.G.A Pocock, "The Ideal of Citizenship Since Classical Times," *Queen's Quarterly* 99, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 33–55.

<sup>24</sup> This tension will play out in greater detail when I outline communitarian and liberal ideas of citizenship below. While I won't spend much time on the specific debate between these two theories, it is enough to note that within this debate the ideals of participation within a community were broadly held in tension

comparing it between regions or even for analyzing discourse, framing the Greek and Roman models as opposites glosses over the assumption within the concept of citizenship that I would like to address.

Therefore, Greek and Roman citizenship cannot be reduced to opposite ends but we must recognize their similar assumptions of the separation of the political, citizenship as an addition, and the citizen as primary. The assumed separation between the political and apolitical is apparent in Aristotle's writings on politics.<sup>25</sup> He begins by talking about the origins of the state, in which this separation is not so obvious. This explanation tells of the natural and teleological movement from the family to the village and finally to several villages which creates the state. The movement he describes seems to indicate the emergence of something that is fully immanent within the spaces and time periods that he is describing. Yet the idea of the state,<sup>26</sup> developing and staying within nature, and the spaces from which it arose, is disrupted when one takes into account Aristotle's claims that the state is both the highest good, or ideal, for which man acts in order to obtain and that it is "clearly prior to the family and the individual." In this way, by claiming that the state is both prior to and beyond the historical development and materialization of the state, Aristotle makes clear that the state is not immanent within the spaces inhabited by citizens, women, and slaves, but rather transcends these specificities and exists independent of both space and time. The state is an idea.

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with the atomic rights-bearing individual who had the prerogative to either participate in politics (the community) or not.

<sup>25</sup> Aristotle, "Politics," in *Great Political Thinkers: From Plato to the Present*, ed. Alan O. Ebenstein, 6th ed. (Florence, KY: Wadsworth Publishing, 1999), 75–108.

<sup>26</sup> The state is also the political community of man.

This conceptualization of the state is coherent with the larger philosophy of ideas that Henri Bergson talks about when comparing Greek thought to modern science.

Bergson explains this independence of ideas in Greek thought:

At most we might say that each of these Ideas is an *ideal*. But it is in the opposite hypothesis that we are placing ourselves. Ideas must then exist by themselves. Ancient philosophy could not escape this conclusion. Plato formulated it and in vain did Aristotle try to avoid it. Since movement arises from the degradation of the immutable, there could be no movement, consequently no sensible world if there were not, somewhere, immutably realized. So, having begun by refusing to Ideas an independent existence, and finding himself nevertheless unable to deprive them of it, Aristotle pressed them into each other, rolled them into a ball, and set above the physical world a form that was thus found to be the Form of Forms, the Idea of Ideas, or, to use his own words, the Thought of Thought.<sup>27</sup>

Taking Aristotle's description of the state in *Politics*, and reading it through Bergson's analysis of the philosophy of ideas, provides interesting insights and reinforces my reading of a separation between the political and apolitical in Greek thought. Thus by elucidating the difference between an Idea as an ideal or having an independent existence, Bergson moves us away from concluding that Aristotle's characterization of the state was a subjective statement on political communities or a utopian statement on how the state should be. Rather, the Idea of the state itself was for Aristotle an independently existing entity that both preceded the individual and the community and also oriented the action of men as the "good" to which they must strive.

Further, in order to posit these immutable and unchanging Ideas as independent entities, Bergson shows that Aristotle had to take these ideas out of movement since movement itself is change and becoming. Immutable ideas cannot exist in movement. That Bergson draws attention to and focuses on movement is especially important because he is a philosopher of duration, becoming, movement, and process. The

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<sup>27</sup> Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (New York: The Modern Library, 1944), 349.

importance of this will become clearer later in the thesis during discussions on space, but it will suffice now to note that Aristotle's removal of the state from movement is also a removal of the state from space and time. This is the meaning of Bergson's description of Aristotle rolling ideas into a ball and setting them above the physical world. He states this even more bluntly in another passage when he says, "duration and becoming are supposed to be only the degradation. Form [Ideas] thus posited independent of time... must be stationed outside space as well as above time."<sup>28</sup>

To continue this reading we need to step back from Bergson and return to Aristotle, specifically his idea of the state needs to be clarified. Aristotle defines the state as a composite of citizens, likening it to a whole that is made up of many parts. Thus when we think of Aristotle as describing the state in a way that exists outside and above space and time, we need to remember that he is not talking about the state as a reified object but rather a composite of citizens that together make up the whole of the state. It is not just a thing, but it is a political community that is outside of space and time. Yet, this definition requires further explanation, which Aristotle provides by defining citizenship as the "power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of any state." Here again Aristotle demonstrates what exactly it is that exists outside of space and time and reaffirms my earlier assertion about a separation between the political and apolitical by stating that "power" is the force that separates citizens from noncitizens. To understand this separation we must remember that power relates to the ability of the mind to dominate the body. In a crude sense, this mind/body split ends up claiming that the mind is political and the body is not, a claim explored in my third chapter through the work of Hannah Arendt.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 346.

Therefore, when considering the state in Aristotle's thought, we are not talking about simply a thing in itself or just an aggregation of citizens, now the actual process of governance comes into play. It is the processes of deliberation and the law within the political community of man that defines the citizen; further, these forms of the political have an existence outside of space and above time. However, this does not mean that Aristotle thought the actual functioning democracy occurred literally outside of space and time. Rather, in its perfect state and at its highest point that the state (and politics) existed outside of space and time. The political was therefore a real independent idea to which the action of men oriented and strove, even if they did not achieve it.

Now, until this point I have argued that the separation between the political and apolitical manifests itself in Greek thought through their philosophy of Ideas and Forms that exist independently outside of space and time. Meaning that the highest form of politics, the state, citizenship, deliberation, and the law already exist and are the point to which we are oriented as we move towards the good life. However, there is another separation that occurred in the actual political happenings of Greece that fell short the their ideal forms. This is the often-cited critique that slaves and women were excluded from politics.<sup>29</sup> To gain more insight on this separation that excluded women and slaves while including landowning men, I turn to Aristotle's reflections on the individual itself as divided between the soul and the body, which plays a role in my assertion of the body later in the paper.

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<sup>29</sup> Mary Dietz G., "Context Is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship," in *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (New York: Verso Books, 1992); Susan Moller Okin, "Women, Equality, and Citizenship," *Queen's Quarterly* 99, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 56–71; S A Marston, "Who Are 'the People'?": Gender, Citizenship, and the Making of the American Nation," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 8, no. 4 (1990): 449–458.



Though I didn't focus on the definition of citizenship, it was not simply to be part of the deliberative or judicial administration, but included the *power* to take part in these processes. In reading this definition we must then ask: what gives one the power to take part in these processes? Aristotle's discussion on slavery provides a good starting point to explore this question, which begins by declaring that it is natural for some people to rule and others to be ruled. This contextualizes the idea of power operationalized in his definition of citizenship. Aristotle therefore posits a power that does not change hands and move around, but is a constant immutable thing, coinciding with the earlier discussed philosophy of ideas. In explicating this innate sort of power or powerlessness, Aristotle explains that an uncorrupted individual is divided into a soul and a body and that the soul is the ruler while the body is ruled. However, if one is corrupted then the body is the ruler and the soul is the ruled. It appears then that this is a condition of power for a citizen to take part in deliberative and judicial processes. One must naturally be able to overcome the body and be dominated by the soul and intellect in order to become a citizen.

It is also interesting that a potential act both makes one a citizen and defines citizenship, rather than the act itself. Thus citizenship is achieved when one attains the potential to take part in deliberative and judicial processes, while that potentiality itself also defines the citizen. Thus it is the same potential for action, gained when the soul and the intellect master the body, which both allows one to bridge the separation between the political and apolitical and defines one as a citizen. Citizenship is the bridge itself, rather than simply the other side of the gap. This insight partially justifies the second two assumptions I claim are within the concept of citizenship, yet leaves unanswered the idea of addition.

That Aristotle conceives of citizenship as an addition to the body is evident in the relation he poses between the soul and the body. Thus, in order for the soul and intellect to dominate and master the body their presence must be *greater* (more) than that of the body. Even equality between the soul and the body is not enough to make a person naturally good and fit to be a citizen, domination must occur.<sup>30</sup> If the intellect must always be “more than” or dominate the body of the citizen, then citizenship itself is a power and rationality that *adds* to the body and nature. Further, it is precisely this addition of citizenship that bridges the separation between the political and apolitical, enabling the mastered body to take part in the political sphere. This justifies my second and third assertions about citizenship’s assumptions, it is an addition to the body that bridges the gap between the political and apolitical, making the citizen the primary – or only – political actor. While I have just addressed the separation between the political and apolitical in democracy as actually practiced by the Greeks, the same argument applies to “the political” as a transcendent idea outside of space and above time. Thus it is necessary to overcome the body in order to take part in actual governing processes that move towards a transcendent idea. It is important to remember both of these separations, and the role of the intellect in overcoming them, as both of them exist simultaneously.

Contrasting the Greek model of citizenship that emphasizes participation in the governing process, the Roman model is used as an example of the passive side of citizenship in which legal status provides protection from the state through negative freedoms.<sup>31</sup> Though common, this strict classification and division between Greek and

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<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, “Politics,” 78.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Walzer, “Citizenship,” in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, ed. Terence Ball, James Farr, and Russell L. Hanson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Pocock, “The Ideal of Citizenship Since Classical Times.”

Roman citizenship can become confusing as later republican theories of citizenship tried to revive the Roman idea of *res publica* as a symbol of the civic and public engagement of citizens lost in modern times through liberal individualism.<sup>32</sup> It is thus necessary to qualify that the idea of citizenship as passive was predominate in the later Roman empire while the idea of an active public was predominate earlier and especially in the writings of Cicero.<sup>33</sup> Having already addressed the separation assumed in Greek active forms of citizenship and given that the majority of citizens in Cicero's writings still maintained a passive status, I will only focus analysis on the caricature of imperial Roman citizenship.

In comparing assumptions within Roman citizenship to Greek citizenship, the main question is what does Roman citizenship do? Specifically, I am interested whether it functions to connect an individual to an otherwise separate political realm. In some regard it seems that this function of citizenship is more apparent in Roman than Greek thought and therefore warrants less attention. The most prescient example is that of the Imperial subject in which the Roman Empire granted the people they conquered certain rights and protections.<sup>34</sup> Though, this granting of rights did not give colonial subject the ability to participate in formal processes, we can still read citizenship as linking them to a separate political sphere. However, this inclusion is qualitatively different than active citizenship. Rather than an inclusion through participation this is an inclusion through control, perhaps in more of a Foucauldian sense of governmentality.<sup>35</sup> This example of an imperial government with passive citizens therefore demonstrates at least the first two

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<sup>32</sup> Richard Dagger, "Republican Citizenship," in *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Professor Bryan S Turner, 1st ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd, 2003), 145–157.

<sup>33</sup> David Burchell, "Ancient Citizenship and Its Inheritors," in *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Professor Bryan S Turner, 1st ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd, 2003), 89–104.

<sup>34</sup> Walzer, "Citizenship," 214–215.

<sup>35</sup> Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, 1st ed. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1991).

assumptions I claim are within the concept of citizenship, that the political is a separate sphere and that citizenship bridges the political and apolitical.

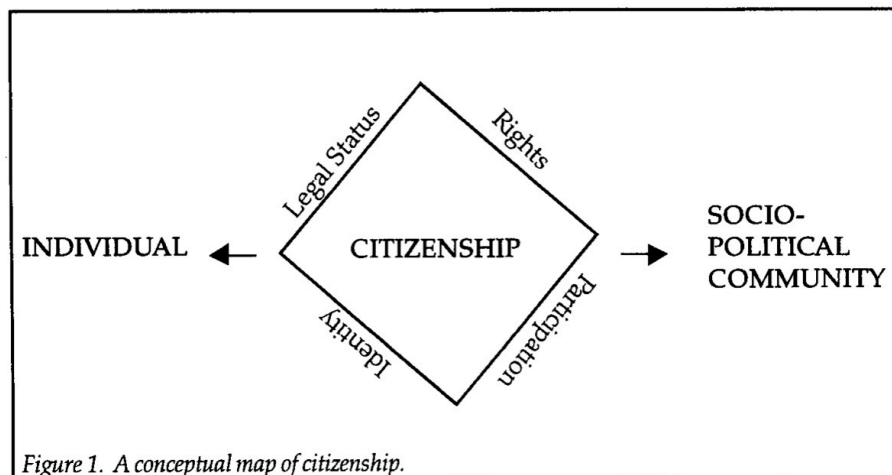
Without a doubt I have strictly defined the assumptions I claim are within Greek and Roman theories of citizenship. However, this thesis does not so much depend on the “correctness” of these readings as opposed to fact that such assumptions of separation are within the concepts themselves and thus available for, and traceable in, modern theories of citizenship. As I will argue, most theories have already or have the potential to work their way out certain forms of these assumptions. What I am interested in is how they work their way out and the concessions they are forced to make in the process.

### **III: Three Approaches to Citizenship**

This thesis roughly divides theories of citizenship into three broad categories: citizenship as status, citizenship as performance, and citizenship as subject. This categorization undoubtedly glosses over important differences between the theories that I explore; yet it is helpful for tracing citizenship theory’s assumptions. But before jumping into these three categorizations I want to contextualize this discussion through a diagram on citizenship meant to broadly represent literature on immigration and citizenship.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Bloemraad, “Citizenship and Immigration a Current Review.”



Visually demonstrating that the assumptions I am concerned with are present within modern theory, this diagram affirms my considerations to this point. At first glance we can see the function of citizenship as bridging the gap between the apolitical individual and the political community, the other two assumptions are implicit within this initial observation. In addition, this diagram makes very clear a point that I have not spent too much time on. The bridging function of citizenship is not simply relegated to legal status. Rather the other dimensions of both identity and participation are aspects of this function of connecting the individual to a separate community. This is important for the exploration through citizenship approaches that I am about to undertake because it means that a focus on citizenship as participation, identity, and belonging do not necessarily undermine the assumptions of separation within citizenship. This is also interesting because the distinction between status and participation (or performance) becomes blurry with regards to the assumptions of separation. Thus, while the state is often thought to be the guarantor of status, we can see how it may be granted through participation or identity. It could be posited (as communitarians claim) that one who participates in civic or political life is conferred the *status* of citizen, and vice versa,

rights do not simply enact themselves, rather the conferment and use of rights takes some amount of participation.<sup>37</sup> The concept of citizenship blurs the lines between participation and status, which is a symptom of the assumptions of separation. Now lets move into the three approaches towards citizenship.

### *Citizenship as Status*

By dividing approaches to citizenship into ideas of status and performance, I have maintained the long running distinction between rights and participation. Moving from the early conceptualizations of citizenship as status in the late Roman Empire, theorizations have largely developed in liberal political philosophy with a quintessential focus on the individual. Developing especially through the political philosophy of John Locke (private property) and Adam Smith (economically rational individual), the citizen in a liberal state tends to be viewed as a consumer in a pluralist democracy where political parties and interest groups compete for their vote or approval.<sup>38</sup> In this situation, the status conferred does not make many demands upon the citizen; rather, the citizen may choose to participate or not in political processes according to their rational logic. Further, equality takes on a distinct meaning in this schema as it is not an equality of results or distribution of resources, but is instead an abstracted equal starting point in which individuals may compete and where the outcome is justified on the basis of a beginning or “natural” equality.<sup>39</sup> Citizenship is the status that actualizes this equal

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<sup>37</sup> Walzer, “Citizenship.”

<sup>38</sup> Martin Carnoy, *The State and Political Theory*, 1st ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 10–43; Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

<sup>39</sup> Carnoy, *The State and Political Theory*, 21.

starting point for individuals through an access to, and recognition in, a political community that functions like a market.

Moving from the more classical incarnations of liberal thought, the idea of citizenship as status continued to develop through the seminal works of both T.H. Marshall and John Rawls. The idea of status is present within Marshall's work not so much as a normative account on citizenship but more concerning its historical development. In accounting for this, Marshall divides the concept of citizenship into different types of rights; these are civil, political, and social. The first, civil rights, refer to the rights and freedom of the individual or the largely negative rights such as freedom of speech and religion that protect one from interference by a sovereign power. Second, political rights represent the ability to exercise political power, which is typically exemplified with suffrage, and lastly, social rights refer to the equality of social conditions through the redistributive powers of the welfare state. Examples of social rights would be public education and social services. After this division, he traces the development of these rights within England, claiming that their acquisition chronologically followed each other, each broadly corresponding to the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>40</sup> While the acquisition of rights gave citizens the ability to organize and demand more rights, status is an important aspect for Marshall as it is only through recognition and the granting of rights by the state that citizenship is achieved. This concern with individual rights carries on from Marshall to Rawls in his theory of justice.

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<sup>40</sup> Marshall, T.H., "Citizenship and Social Class," in *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, ed. Gershon Shafir, 1st ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 93–112.

For Rawls, society is a system of fair social cooperation between free and equal persons.<sup>41</sup> Within this system of social cooperation, the fundamental question becomes finding a basis of political agreement, a common ground. Replying to this question, Rawls claims that the original position, a position that removes oneself from the contingencies of the social world through the veil of ignorance, is the common ground upon which society may be built through a concept of justice.<sup>42</sup> This basic concept of justice is founded upon two principles: 1) that each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties, and 2) social and economic inequalities are to be of fair and equal opportunity and of the greatest benefits of the least advantaged of society. Within this topology, the first principle of justice is citizenship, because it is the achievement of an equal status and recognition within a formal system of rights and obligations. This is the reason why Rawls defines a person as “someone who can be a citizen, a fully cooperating member of society over a complete life.”<sup>43</sup> It means that while Marshall thought of recognition by the state as the crucial defining moment of citizenship and its rights, Rawls locates this moment within the mutual recognition and cooperation among citizens, or persons. This is perhaps an outline of what Hannah Arendt refers to as “the right to have rights” within the Rawlsian notion of citizenship.<sup>44</sup> Thus while Arendt is known for her Republican and participatory democratic ideals, it is interesting that citizenship is the gatekeeper to that political community, keeping those

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<sup>41</sup> Rawls, John, “Justice as Fairness in the Liberal Polity,” in *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, ed. Gershon Shafir, 1st ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 57.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>44</sup> Benhabib, *The Rights of Others*, 49–69; Frank I Michelman, “Parsing ‘a Right to Have Rights’,” *Constellations* 3, no. 2 (October 1, 1996): 200–208.



without citizenship outside the systems of laws and participation.<sup>45</sup> To some extent, I think Arendt embodies this ambiguity I referred to earlier, in which status and participation are complementary rather than contradictory concepts.

Now, having roughly laid out a few different conceptions of citizenship as a legal status, I want to ask how they maintain or disrupt the assumptions of separation? As the idea of status inherently separates between those who have and those who do not, or those on the inside and those on the outside, I am going to say that on a general level theories that conceptualize citizenship as a status maintain the idea of a separate political sphere and the primacy of citizenship within that sphere. However, more recent questions that revolve around the limits of our notions of exclusionary citizenship, provide the cutting edge of this loosely defined body of literature. Thus while maintaining the assumptions of separation, it has been attempts to overcome them that have provided the most interesting work in this field.

One approach at overcoming this exclusionary limit of citizenship has been to prioritize cosmopolitan virtues and the idea that citizenship rights are only supplements to the more fundamental and pre-existing rights of personhood.<sup>46</sup> Thus by the virtue of being human, it is claimed that there are some rights that must be recognized regardless of citizenship status. In this way part of this project is to create a citizenship that is not fully exclusionary since the basic rights of personhood are not conditioned by citizenship status.<sup>47</sup> This differs from what many cite as the claims of post-national citizenship: that

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<sup>45</sup> Seyla Benhabib, "Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993), 73–98.

<sup>46</sup> Benhabib, *The Rights of Others*; Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien*; Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal, "Toward a Postnational Model of Citizenship," in *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, ed. Gershon Shafir, 1st ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

<sup>47</sup> Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien*, 80.

the nation-state is dead and in its place international regimes of governance will emerge (are emerging) as the guarantor of rights. However, rather than proclaiming the irrelevance of the nation-state per se, many of these theories suggest that there should be a shift from the citizen to the person as the foundation of the rights that national governments are responsible for guaranteeing. The change in emphasis is therefore not necessarily *who* guarantees rights (i.e. the nation-state) as much as it is the foundation of rights.<sup>48</sup> Theoretically, such an idea is represented in Benhabib's term "cosmopolitan federalism" in which smaller communities are built upon the ideal of universal or human rights. While empirically, this tension between the "person" and the "citizen" is also playing out in the United States in interesting and paradoxical ways. A case in which the traditional division of the federal government's operation under the exclusionary category of the "citizen" and local government as operation under the inclusive category of the "person" is being challenged, restructured, and rescaled.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to extending the universal rights of personhood, another approach to dealing with the limits of citizenship has been to make citizenship a gradient category rather than a strict either/or. In *Semi-Citizenship*, Elizabeth Cohen undertakes this project and begins by critiquing citizenship theory for its prioritization of normative theory that overlooks the variety of ways citizenship is partially instead of fully experienced.<sup>50</sup> In response, she ends up arguing for an understanding of citizenship as a status and political category that is defined through both governmental institution and normative ideals. By

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<sup>48</sup> Soysal, "Toward a Postnational Model of Citizenship," 195.

<sup>49</sup> Mark Ellis, "Unsettling Immigrant Geographies: US Immigration and the Politics of Scale," *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 97, no. 1 (2006): 49–58; Monica W. Varsanyi, "Rescaling the 'Alien,' Rescaling Personhood: Neoliberalism, Immigration, and the State," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 98, no. 4 (December 2008): 877–896; Monica Varsanyi, ed., *Taking Local Control: Immigration Policy Activism in U.S. Cities and States* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2010).

<sup>50</sup> Cohen, *Semi-Citizenship in Democratic Politics*, 40.

positing that the rights of citizenship are not contingent upon each other, she claims they may be separated and granted in bundles. Such non-contingent rights are the basis for a concept of semi-citizenship, which would formalize the rights and benefit those who do not achieve full citizenship, such as children, prisoners, and resident migrants.

Returning to the assumptions of separation, I think we can say that cosmopolitan theorists attempt to overcome the separation between the political and apolitical by claiming that the rights of personhood are more fundamental than citizenship. While this challenges the idea of separation to some extent, by claiming one's humanity rather than political being as a source of rights, its implications for ideas of political participation or action are ambiguous. It is largely passive rights that are human rather than the more overtly political rights of activity, even though there are a variety of ways this ambiguity can be and is addressed. Further, the idea of personhood in this schema is an abstract and universal figure, reminiscent of the transcendent idea in Greek thought. Let us remember that for the Greeks too, political life was the highest form of being *human*. To this extent one wonders whether the abstract person is not itself outside of space and above time. At its best, such as approach still assumes a separation between political and apolitical and simply claims that personhood rather than citizenship should bridge that gap. On the other hand, for Cohen and the idea of semi-citizenship, overcoming this gap does not so much take the form of personhood rights as it involves recognizing the semi-citizens already overlooked by normative thought. Thus the separation is overcome in her thought by claiming that citizenship does not provide only one bridge over the gap through a singular and contingent bundle of rights, but that it provided multiple bridges in the form of disaggregated rights.

Therefore, these examples demonstrate that conceptions of citizenship as status have the potential to overcome the gap between the political and apolitical, or the separation between inclusion and exclusion, in new and innovative ways. However, these theories ultimately do this by reformulating citizenship and positing the gap as something to be overcome in the first place, thereby maintaining citizenship as the primary object of concern and desire. This means that these theories maintain the first and third assumptions I enumerated – there is a separation between the political and apolitical and citizenship is primary in political action – while they add complexity to the second claim that citizenship is the only way to bridge the gap.

### *Citizenship as Performance*

Moving from the individual with rights to participation and the community, we may trace out the second approach of citizenship as performance. Developing from Greek and early Roman conceptions of citizenship as active, this line of thought has continued into modern citizenship theory under the auspices of communitarianism and republicanism. For communitarian theory, the major shift away from status is moving from the individual as an atomic rights bearer to an individual that acknowledges the common goals of the community to be their own, essentially finding their fulfillment in the community.<sup>51</sup> Thus if citizenship is taken to embody both rights and responsibilities,

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<sup>51</sup> Benjamin Barber, “Foundationalism and Democracy,” in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 348–360; Adrian Oldfield, “Citizenship and Community: Civic Republicanism and the Modern World,” in *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, ed. Gershon Shafir, 1st ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 75–92.

the communitarian suggests that one fully achieves their rights only by performing their duties to the community.<sup>52</sup>

However, such a statement about the rights and duties of the citizen requires defining these duties of communitarian and republican theories. Such a definition begins with a basic distinction between public and private.<sup>53</sup> In its fundamental form, public responsibilities fall to the citizen as these individuals make up the “public” that allows the fulfillment of their rights. This focus on public responsibility contrasts the consumer model of the individual proposed by liberal theory where the private issues of ones family and the immediate concerns of the self and ones pleasure are primary. The public, and one’s involvement in it, is therefore more important than the private. Defining the public itself, one could focus on consequences that extend beyond an immediate relation, the materiality of open spaces, or the arena/sphere of discussion.<sup>54</sup> The important part is that the public is in someway beyond the isolated individual and their immediate relations.

So, the public and the community are broadly defined as beyond the individual and replace the individual as the primary objects of focus, created through specific actions of individuals that recognize each other as belonging to a community. In order for the community to exist, individuals must perform it. This means that the public is not simply an agglomeration of people but a group that fundamentally relates by recognizing

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Oldfield, “Citizenship and Community: Civic Republicanism and the Modern World,” 78.

<sup>53</sup> Dagger, “Republican Citizenship”; Dietz, “Context Is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship”; Maurizio Passerin d’ Entreves, “Hannah Arendt and the Idea of Citizenship,” in *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (New York: Verso Books, 1992), 145–168.

<sup>54</sup> Dewey, *The Public & Its Problems*, 12; Habermas, Jurgen, “Three Normative Models of Democracy,” in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 21–30; Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*, 1st ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003).

that they are a group.<sup>55</sup> Within this schema, citizenship is the performance of these public and community relations.

A classic account of the normative relations that constitute publics and communities is Michael Walzer's work on civil society.<sup>56</sup> Civil Society is the space of uncoerced human association that is usually conceptualized as being between the individual and the state. In this sense politics is not relegated to political parties and state legislation, but is part of a broader network of relations that can include faith, family, and ideological networks. In this way, citizenship is only one of the many roles that an individual plays within civil society. Yet, it is a rather unique role in that state power is necessary to challenge the inequalities that arise within civil society.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, Walzer argues that this state power must be governed by its members, through "critical associationism," in order to use it for redistribution purposes.<sup>58</sup> Such critical associationism claims that the performance of citizenship should be dispersed into smaller groups with a greater diversity of decision-making roles. Through this map of how citizenship and association should look, Walzer paints a picture of citizenship diffused across society and associations, maintaining it as a normative form of participation that challenges the boundaries of citizenship while maintaining its essence as a particular kind of conscious act or performance.

While different in many ways from republican and civil society theories of democracy, Jurgen Habermas' model of deliberative democracy provides a general idea

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<sup>55</sup> Dewey, *The Public & Its Problems*.

<sup>56</sup> Michael Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument," in *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, ed. Gershon Shafir, 1st ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 291–308.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

of what participation in these spheres might look like.<sup>59</sup> It would involve taking part in the rational deliberation that occurs within the public sphere. Reason is the key in these deliberations as it is this force that ultimately leads to consensus and an ethical conclusion if the procedures themselves are followed correctly. This is a proceduralist understanding of democracy that differs from communitarianism because procedure rather than the common good is the uniting and legitimating element in the process. This point is important because it means that if the citizen is defined as one that participates in this process, then the capacity for a predefined rational deliberation is necessary, meaning that those who act politically must do so in the same way.<sup>60</sup>

Concluding this exploration of communitarian and republican thought, It seems that they challenge the separation between the political and apolitical by extending it outside of formal processes of the government. Yet, they also maintain it to some extent by predefining political action and citizenship performances as, presumably, the only means to reach the political realm. For example, these theories would not consider a person walking down the street as political whereas they would consider participating in civic or activist groups as political.

While the aforementioned theories seem to maintain the assumptions of separation, in a similar way to how Greek theories of participation do, it has been literature on immigration and labor that has pushed the boundaries of these assumptions and challenged the strict distinction between citizen and noncitizen that follows from

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<sup>59</sup> Habermas, Jürgen, "Three Normative Models of Democracy."

<sup>60</sup> Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actual Existing Democracy," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993), 109–42; Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, New ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2002), chp. 2.

them.<sup>61</sup> This work argues that participation is a way for noncitizens to affect and influence the political sphere. A good example of this research is Janice Fine and Jennifer Gordon's work on immigrant workers centers, which analyzes how undocumented workers affect political processes. Some of the activities they document include public rallies, meeting with elected officials, and even writing and trying to push through legislation. However, while overcoming the idea of noncitizen exclusion, this argument does not challenge the separation between the political and apolitical itself. Gordon and Fine instead challenge that one needs legal status in order to be a citizen as the term used by Gordon, "noncitizen citizenship" suggests. The reasoning of this concept rests upon the idea that legal status is only one aspect of citizenship and that through the other aspects, such as participation, noncitizens may still perform communitarian ideals of citizenship and affect a separate political process. In the end, this argument reinforces conceptions of the political sphere as separate and citizenship as the mode by which it is reached in order to make moral claims that noncitizens should be given status and recognition. This is not to say that such a goal is wrong or not necessary, rather I am observing that such an argument is made with a particular action or goal in mind (achieving status for undocumented workers). While such assumptions may be necessary to achieve those specific goals, this does not mean that theories oriented towards action are total and the final statements on the realities of citizenship. While such an approach is positive, it must be recognized in conjunction with its pragmatic end. Most importantly, we must also

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<sup>61</sup> Fine, *Worker Centers*; Gordon, *Suburban Sweatshops*; Anne McNevin, "Doing What Citizens Do: Migrant Struggles at the Edges of Political Belonging," *Local-Global: Identity, Security, Community* 6 (2009): 67–77; Ruth Milkman, *L.A. Story: Immigrant Workers And the Future of the U.S. Labor Movement* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation Publications, 2006); Stephanie Pincetl, "Challenges to Citizenship: Latino Immigrants and Political Organizing in the Los Angeles Area," *Environment and Planning A* 26 (1994): 895–914; Varsanyi, "The Paradox of Contemporary Immigrant Political Mobilization."



remember the assumptions that these pragmatic theories and goals hold and always question their implications.

### *Citizenship as Subject*

While my discussions on theories and approaches to citizenship have largely stayed within the discipline of political science, this last approach on subjectivity seems to have a greater hold within geography. Perhaps this results from a lack of normative theorizing within the discipline and a greater methodological focus on theoretically informed empirical work. Whatever the reason, scholarship that frames citizenship as a subject position is the final approach to citizenship that I will explore.

In considering subjectivity and citizenship there seems to be two dominant ways that it can be approached. The first considers the subject as a form of control or disciplining of individuals; in our case this means citizenship as a form of disciplining individuals within the liberal state.<sup>62</sup> This focus on subject formation falls in line with “rainy day” readings of Foucault that focus on the panoptic and disciplining functions of power and could perhaps be stretched to include Agamben’s reading of bio-power and bare life in which the focus is on the sovereign who has the ability to decide on the state of exception. This imagery of the sovereign and the panopticon evokes a largely vertical power relation in which research would seek to understand how the subject position of “citizen” disciplines the conduct of residents. Yet, while discipline is an important aspect of the work of Foucault, the importance of his contributions to understanding power was

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<sup>62</sup> Foucault, “Governmentality”; Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage, 1995); Margo Huxley, “Geographies of Governmentality;,” in *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*, ed. Jeremy W. Crampton and Stuart Elden (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub Co, 2007), 185–200; Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

that it is not only repressive but also productive. Power is not simply a vertical relationship. This production of subjectivity is more in the direction of the second main approach to studying citizen subjectivity, which concerns how a subject is created rather than its rationale of control.<sup>63</sup> This second approach to subjectivity and citizenship will be the main focus of this section, as it has had the most explicit engagement with the concept of citizenship recently.

First, let's recall the presuppositions I termed the assumptions of separation and how our current options challenge the division between inclusion and exclusion that these assumptions set up. If "citizenship as status" overcomes inclusion/exclusion by claiming the rights of personhood or multiplying the bridges between the political and apolitical, and "citizenship as performance" overcomes inclusion/exclusion by claiming that one does not need legal status to be a citizen, then "citizenship as subject" seems to overcome inclusion/exclusion by not assuming a separation between the political and apolitical to begin with. Citizenship as subject has two approaches that move beyond this assumed separation, these are the "constitutive other" and "everyday life."

The logic of the constitutive other is basically the argument that any group formation or community necessarily creates an outside of those excluded when it creates an inside of those included. However, this does not simply create a line of division and exclusion between those inside and those outside because those on the outside are included through their exclusion. Thus inside and outside cannot be divided as atomic

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<sup>63</sup> Nicholas De Genova, *Working the Boundaries: Race, Space, and "Illegality" in Mexican Chicago* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2005); Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*; Isin, *Being Political*; Isin and Nielsen, *Acts of Citizenship*; Secor, "'There Is an Istanbul That Belongs to Me'"; Patricia Ehrkamp and Helga Leitner, "Beyond National Citizenship: Turkish Immigrants and the (RE)Construction of Citizenship in Germany," *Urban Geography* 24, no. 2 (March 1, 2003): 127–146.

entities. Taken as a whole, the inside and outside mutually create one another.<sup>64</sup> This complicates many previous theories of citizenship by unsettling ideas of exclusion yet claiming that some form of exclusion is necessary.<sup>65</sup> This would mean that cosmopolitan ideas of a total inclusion are impossible and also that communitarian ideas about bounded and predefined groups are fantasies. In the end this body of literature does not erase the idea of inclusion and exclusion but rather diversifies its modes and complicates its functioning, specifically by posing inclusion/exclusion as relationally oppositional.

Sometimes complimenting this logic of the constitutive other and other times ignoring it, the second approach to citizen as subject focuses on everyday life. This approach of everyday life extends beyond simply the realm of citizenship to a broader project of rethinking many fundamental political concepts in the social sciences, such as the state.<sup>66</sup> The basic idea of this literature is that concepts such as citizenship and the state are not reified objects that someone can hold, rather these “things” are created through the relations, acts and performances that people undertake on a daily basis in the mundane aspects of life. Such a creation can take place in a variety of different ways, from the daily routines of people in bureaucratic offices to actions that refer to the object of the state, such as a bar refusing (or not) minors entrance. Empirically, such an approach holds a lot of potential for qualitative research, as one can consider how people

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<sup>64</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*; Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien*; Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*; Isin, *Being Political*; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage, 1979).

<sup>65</sup> This has made the idea popular in critical migration and citizenship studies, see William Walters, “Mapping the Territory of (Non-)Citizenship,” in *Acts of Citizenship*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen (New York: Zed Books, 2008), 186.

<sup>66</sup> Philip Abrams, “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State (1977),” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 1988): 58–89; Timothy Mitchell, “The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics,” *The American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (March 1991): 77; Alison Mountz, “Human Smuggling, the Transnational Imaginary, and Everyday Geographies of the Nation-State,” *Antipode* 35, no. 3 (July 1, 2003): 622–644; Alison Mountz, *Seeking Asylum: Human Smuggling and Bureaucracy at the Border* (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2010); Joe Painter, “Prosaic Geographies of Stateness,” *Political Geography* 25, no. 7 (September 2006): 752–774.

negotiate, create, and resist such concepts as citizenship and the state in their daily life.<sup>67</sup>

Theoretically, this approach has been driven by the work of people like Michel de Certeau and Mikhail Bakhtin, though often finding a voice within citizenship studies through a much broader range of theorists.<sup>68</sup>

For now, let's return to the assumptions of separation that form the narrative of this chapter. As I said earlier, the approach of "citizenship as subject" has come the farthest in disavowing these assumptions inherited from the earliest formulations of citizenship. This is primarily represented in the investigation of everyday life as political, the very acts and relations that communitarians were not concerned with because they were "private" and individual, have now been recast as an inherently political aspect of life. However, this is not to say that *all* acts or even simply biological life is political. It is always through relations to subject positions, identity, discourse, etc... that this body of literature attributes a political character to actions and relations. Engin Isin is a great example of this type of research that focuses on subjectivity, especially in his delineation of *positions* towards which people orient their actions and through which they may be political.<sup>69</sup> This idea of positions as entities independent of individual bodies is evident in his distinctions between politics and the political that parallels a distinction between the ontic and ontological. Isin therefore divides the positions that orient action into four categories of citizens, alien, stranger, and outsider, which are charted within a larger schema of being political in the table below.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ehrkamp and Leitner, "Beyond National Citizenship"; James Holston, "Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship," in *Cities and Citizenship*, ed. James Holston (1999: Duke University Press Books, 1998), 155–173; Secor, "There Is an Istanbul That Belongs to Me."

<sup>68</sup> Engin F. Isin, "Theorizing Acts of Citizenship," in *Acts of Citizenship*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen (New York: Zed Books, 2008), 15–43.

<sup>69</sup> Isin, *Being Political*.

<sup>70</sup> Engin F. Isin, "Engaging, Being, Political," *Political Geography* 24, no. 3 (March 2005): 376.

Table 1  
Ways of being political: citizenship as otherness

Spaces	Positions (groups)	Modes of being political								
		Solidaristic			Agonistic			Alienating		
		Forms of being political			Forms of being political			Forms of being political		
		Orientations	Strategies	Technologies	Orientations	Strategies	Technologies	Orientations	Strategies	Technologies
	Citizens									
	Strangers									
	Outsiders									
	Aliens									

Through this table we can see and appreciate that it is not simply citizens who are political, as the second of the assumptions of separation claims, but that those whom citizenship creates as the different categories of non-citizen are in fact political through the relation that excludes them. If I follow Isin's argument correctly, it is precisely this (citizen) relation of exclusion that keeps noncitizens from formal political process, but also allows them to become their own political being. By this I mean that Isin claims noncitizens must challenge their position as excluded and assert their own definition of justice in order to become political. However, through this argument political action is once again narrowly defined in relation to conscious action and subjectivity. Thus it is only through a conscious acknowledgment of one's position and an assertion of a new subjectivity that one becomes political. This means that the realm of the political is itself limited and not always present, it can only be reached through certain acts. Further, the citizen still seems to be the primary object of orientation for the other subjects, only instead of it being the teleological end state it is the object of opposition. This is why there is only one form of the citizen while there are three forms of the noncitizen, because it is primary and the term that differentiates. Thus if political action is once again narrowly limited and the citizen still maintains a hegemonic position, I think that the

assumptions of separation may be more present within the “citizen as subject” approach than first thought.

This is my analysis of Isin when he says:

In a nutshell, I interpret categories such as citizens, strangers, outsiders, and aliens not as beings with observable acts and qualities but as *positions* toward which beings orient...I interpret the *positions* as something irreducible to and different from the attributes of singular beings.<sup>71</sup>

This reading is further justified in his statement that:

Becoming political is that moment when a being constitutes itself as a subject of justice... Being constituted as a subject of justice means making a claim (solidaristic, agonistic, alienating), articulating it (orientations, strategies and technologies) and making and articulating it from a position (citizens, strangers, outsider, alien).<sup>72</sup>

Therefore, it is no longer citizenship that provides one with passage into being political but now it has increased to four different positions through which one can become political. It seems like a rather ambivalent way to overcome the “logic of exclusion” or what I have termed the assumptions of separation. I say it is ambivalent because it seems only partial, or like one form of separation between the citizen and noncitizens is being replaced for a different form of separation between the individual being and “positions.” This would be similar to the strategy that Cohen used in overcoming inclusion/exclusion, simply proliferating the bridges that lead to the political. However, I must confess that I am venturing into terrain that pushes the limits of my knowledge, meaning that further inquiry will need more philosophical depth and rigor in order to think about separation and the political per se.<sup>73</sup> Such work is beyond this thesis. For my purposes, it is enough to make note that Isin’s primary concern is about subject positions, which overcome

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 380.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 382.

<sup>73</sup> I believe that such an investigation would benefit from exploring the role of Heidegger in Isin’s thought and his distinction between ontic and ontological.

(ostensibly) the separation between the political and apolitical but seem to retain in a different form the primacy of citizenship. This will contrast my reflections on the body, struggle, the production of space, and politics as more than subjectivity.

#### **IV: Conclusion**

Having briefly surveyed literature on citizenship, I conclude by observing that these theories have dealt with and conflated the notions of membership and action without properly considering the consequences. Through such a conflation, thinkers seem to assume human association as the basis of politics and therefore make action dependent upon an association of members. Given that this conflation is often unconscious it seems to account for much of the frustration with the slipperiness and vagueness of citizenship itself. Going forward, my project is partially trying to see what happens if we directly confront the slippage between membership (citizenship) and action and purposively reflect upon their differences. Therefore, the rest of my thesis considers action as a different *kind* of question than membership and suggest that it is a more fundamental question of politics, one that investigates the condition of politics rather than its occurrences, and places its occurrence within its condition. To do this, the next chapter will begin to theorize a concept of struggle, as the condition within which to ask the question of action (rather than citizenship). The third chapter will explore the question of action itself.

## Chapter 2: Struggle

Entering graduate school in geography, I quickly discovered the need to become familiar with two key concepts: process and relationality. Theoretically, these concepts are attractive because of the potential they hold for destabilizing that which has been previous thought of as fixed or stable. Whether it be space, the state, the urban, or a map, the project of turning the often assumed “things” into “processes” seemingly has no end, all things can shown to be processes or relations, at least it seems.<sup>74</sup>

However, as I have grown more familiar with this argument, I have been struck with the diversity of approaches and perspectives that are able to convincingly deploy the argument that “x” has been ill conceived as a thing and must be reconceived as a process. It is an argument that spans the clunky and yet persistent divide in human geography between marxists and post-structuralists. The question that this brings up for me, is that even if the (re)introduction of process into our thinking is a productive and necessary move (which I wholeheartedly agree), why is process framed as the crux of the argument? the “ah-ha” moment? It seems that given the extensive use of processual thought in critical human geography, it is no longer enough to simply state that we need to think “x” thing in terms of process. Instead, we must also investigate the category of

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<sup>74</sup> Neil Brenner, “The Urbanization Question, or, the Field Formerly Known as Urban Studies” (presented at the Bloustein Colloquium Series, Rutgers University, February 10, 2011); Bob Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State*, 1st ed. (Malden, MA: Polity, 2003); Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge, “Rethinking Maps,” *Progress in Human Geography* 31, no. 3 (June 2007): 331–344; Doreen B Massey, *For Space*, 1st ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd, 2005); Katharyne Mitchell and Marston, Sallie A., “Citizens and the State: Citizenship Formations in Space and Time,” in *Spaces of Democracy: Geographical Perspectives on Citizenship, Participation and Representation*, ed. Clive Barnett and Murray Low, 1st ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd, 2004).



“process” itself and investigate our assumptions about *how* processes occur and what *forces* are at work in their movement, which includes relations of production and evolution.

This is partially the labor of this chapter as it works through the concept of struggle. In elaborating the concept of struggle present within different philosophical and political thought, I hope to eventually situate action within the condition of struggle rather than citizenship.<sup>75</sup> Which is not simply to say that struggle is a continuous process with no end point, but that the way we conceptualize the functioning of this process is of the utmost importance.<sup>76</sup> For my concerns, this explication of the concept of struggle fundamentally challenges the research questions that we ask. I argue that the question of action is different in kind from that of citizenship and that their conflation has contributed to the assumptions of separation and such false problems as inclusion/exclusion in political processes.

In order to make this assertion about the question of action in the third chapter, I will attempt to convince the reader of two claims that contrast the assumptions of separation. The first claim is that reduction rather than addition is the condition of the intellect, subjectivity, political concepts, and citizenship. The second claim is that things (processes and bodies) relate through dissociation (bifurcation, complexification) rather than association.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> This is of course not to say that struggle itself is not a movement or action. As I will explore more in the third chapter, action itself is really more of a way to ask a question within what I will describe as the broader movement of struggle. It is likely a difference of degree rather than kind between action and struggle.

<sup>76</sup> Chantal Mouffe, ed., *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community* (New York: Verso Books, 1992).

<sup>77</sup> One way to think about this claim is that every “coming together” is simultaneously a “moving apart.” Thus to focus on association as the political moment itself is a static idea that refuses to think about *where* the associating elements may have come from, dissociation on the one hand focus on movement as

In relation to the assumptions of separation these two claims are important because the first would completely erase the gap of separation by claiming that politics is not an addition to the world that transcends space, but is a reduction within a world of relations that is always greater than it. I will argue that this diminishes the primacy of citizenship. The second claim challenges what we conceive as the conditions of politics. Instead of association, community, and the public being the conditions of politics, my claim would suggest that it is not coming together but rather growing apart that produces the political. For me, these two claims are very experimental and I myself am sometimes unsure of some of their implications. Instead of a dogmatic statement, I am rather testing these ideas to see in what ways they work and in what ways they fail. But most importantly, I am interested in what they enable us to do.

To set up these two claims, I must first explore the concept of struggle that will dovetail and refer back to my previous conversation on the assumptions of separation. Framing this conversation I lay out two contrasting ways with which to conceptualize struggle. The first is a dialectical model that enables us to bridge the gap created by the assumptions of separation, the second conceives of struggle-as-growth that erases the assumptions of separation, not by critique but by offering a more appealing explanation.

## **I: Bridging the Gap**

Dialectical thought has been praised, derided, and yet persisted throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and long before. Coming out of this movement within intellectual circles and

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primary as associational moments are thought about as always growing apart, moving on. Take gathering in public space as an example, to emphasize association only as the political element in such a moment is to think of a sectioned off and static moment that refuses to simply wonder where those gathering came from and where they will go.

trends, its recent relevance and the hope for its re-conceptualization, has been its processual nature.<sup>78</sup> This emphasis on movement and becoming is what interests me in exploring the dialectic within the concept of struggle, which is a dynamic and fluid concept itself. This section Investigates the internal movement of the dialectic, how this dialectical movement has materialized within the concept of struggle, and a dialectical understanding of struggle may deal with the assumptions of separation concerning politics and citizenship.

While dialectical thought is as at least as diverse as the Marxists with whom it is usually associated, I will have to limit my discussion of it to the account provided by Hegel and then later return to a reworking of the concept by Henri Lefebvre.<sup>79</sup> There are three key terms at work in Hegel's dialectic, thesis, antitheses, and synthesis. Located within the thesis, Hegel claims that there is necessarily an antithesis or a contradiction. This contradiction is the relation between the thesis and antithesis and is essential for the movement and process of dialectics. It is through contradiction and negation that the thesis and antithesis can become reconciled and unified as the immanent truth within both of these terms transcend, through the negative logic of reason and the mind, to become a unified third term: a synthesis.<sup>80</sup> Contradiction and Synthesis are therefore two key characteristics of the Hegelian dialectic, and they are points where people have tried to

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<sup>78</sup> Deborah Dixon, Keith Woodward, and John Paul Jones III, "On the Other Hand ... Dialectics," *Environment and Planning A* 40 (2008): 2549–2561; D. Harvey, "On Fatal Flaws and Fatal Distractions," *Progress in Human Geography* 23, no. 4 (December 1999): 557–566.

<sup>79</sup> A. Jones and M. Goodwin, "Dialectics and Difference: Against Harvey's Dialectical 'post-Marxism'," *Progress in Human Geography* 23, no. 4 (December 1999): 529–555; Harvey, "On Fatal Flaws and Fatal Distractions."

<sup>80</sup> Georg Hegel, *Reason in History, a General Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953); Henri Lefebvre, *Dialectical materialism*; (London: Cape, 1968).

reclaim the dialectic and avoid its teleology and claims of totality.<sup>81</sup> For our concerns, these two characteristics will also be signposts with which to assess how dialectical thought has engaged the concept of struggle. With regard to contradiction, this will become important because it means that all productive and moving relations, or processes, occur on a spectrum of opposition. Thus struggle is always (to different degrees) oppositional. The synthetic characteristic is very important for our considerations as well, as this is the culmination of the transcendental movement of opposition. This culminating transcendence is very similar to the philosophy of ideas present within Aristotle's elaboration of the state. Thus in explaining Hegel, Lefebvre quotes this passage:

We give the name of dialectic to that higher movement of the reason in which these absolutely separate appearances pass into one another... and in which the presupposition is transcended.<sup>82</sup>

Mind and the Idea or, to be more exact, absolute knowledge are the supreme Third Term which contains and resolves the oppositions and contradictions of the universe.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, just as Aristotle's state was a separate entity, an Idea, that could only be reached through citizenship, the third term in Hegel is an Idea that can only be reached through opposition and becoming conscious.<sup>84</sup> The question that my thesis poses to dialectical struggle is therefore: how do the characteristics of contradiction and transcendence allow us to engage with the assumptions of separation and the question of action?

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<sup>81</sup> Marcus A Doel, "Dialectics Revisited. Reality Discharged," *Environment and Planning A* 40, no. 11 (2008): 2631 – 2640; Anna J Secor, "Žižek's Dialectics of Difference and the Problem of Space," *Environment and Planning A* 40, no. 11 (2008): 2623 – 2630.

<sup>82</sup> Lefebvre, *Dialectical materialism*; , 27.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>84</sup> Stephen Houlgate, "G.W.F. Hegel: The Phenomenology of Spirit," in *The Blackwell Guide to Continental Philosophy*, ed. Robert Solomon and David Sherman (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 8–29.

Marxist state theory provides an excellent example of how dialectical thought can be used to conceptualize struggle, especially in a way that overcomes a gap or separation. Only instead of struggle overcoming the gap between form and content as in the thought of Hegel, struggle for state theory has had to overcome the gap between state and society. Early theories of the state conceived of it as a distinct entity separated from society. Yet, this separation began to be problematized by institutions that fit into neither category of state or society and the growing relevance of processual and relational thought within the social sciences.<sup>85</sup> For example think about the subcontracting of state services, such as charter schools. Is a charter school a state institution, a societal institution, or a private institution? The lines between these spheres of the state and society begin to become blurry when considering such cases.<sup>86</sup>

Poulantzas overcomes this separation between the state and society through the idea of struggle.<sup>87</sup> Defining the state as the condensation and materialization of struggle, he argues that it results from the relations of production, which is the inherent conflict that occurs between the Bourgeois and the Proletariat. Through this process of materialization, the state embodies benefits for both capitalists (industry subsidies and infrastructure) and for workers (collective bargaining rights and social welfare). This process of struggle is therefore not simply a teleological movement that ends with the state, though the state is the third synthetic term within the dialectical relation. This is

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<sup>85</sup> Joe Painter, "State:Society," in *Spaces of Geographical Thought: Deconstructing Human Geography's Binaries*, ed. Paul J Cloke and Ron Johnston, 1st ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd, 2005), 42–60.

<sup>86</sup> This phenomena is also discussed in relation to the idea of the shadow state. See: Robert Lake and Kathe Newman, "Differential Citizenship in the Shadow State," *GeoJournal* 58 (2002): 109–120.

<sup>87</sup> Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (New York: Verso, 2001); Andrew Jonas, "Review Essay. State, Territory, and the Internationalization of Capital: Critical Reflections on the Selected Writings of Nicos Poulantzas and Henri Lefebvre," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29, no. 5 (2011): 941.

perhaps where his dialectical thought differs from Hegel, the transcendence is not so apparent.<sup>88</sup> Instead of the relations of production simply forming the state, they are also in turn formed by the state, which means that capitalism needs the state just as much as it forms and shapes the state. This is dialectical thought at work, and it is an important consideration for this chapter as it begins a process of conceiving the state and society as symptoms of struggle. However, while this conception of struggle may be appealing for its ability to overcome gaps, we must flesh out in more detail how exactly that process does (or could) happen.

While struggle may appear trite due to its overuse, especially in Marxist and post-Marxist thought, it contains much more depth and potential than is usually allowed. Typically this notion is used to denote two interrelated imaginaries, these being the cause of an effect and the means to an end.<sup>89</sup> Thus for Poulantzas, the state is the effect of struggle and struggle is also the means by which to capture the capitalist state and radically transform it toward a socialist future. Throughout this conceptualization, struggle takes on the imaginary of an instrument. It is an instrument that has constructed an effect (the capitalist state) and may be used in order to reconstruct that effect (a socialist state).<sup>90</sup> By maintaining this imagery of an instrument, struggle becomes a thing that is differentiated primarily by which side of an effect it temporally occurs. In Poulantzas' case this is determined by whether or not it is before or after the effect of the capitalist state. Thus "cause of" refers to the past or before an effect and "means to" refers to the future or after that same effect.

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<sup>88</sup> This may be true to an extent, though in the last chapter of *State, Power, Socialism* his discussion of the formation of a socialist state has a transcendent quality to it.

<sup>89</sup> Mitchell, *The Right to the City*; Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*.

<sup>90</sup> This does not mean that instrumentalist imaginaries do not think of struggle as a process. Indeed the process itself is the instrument.

This formulation of struggle comes close to instrumentalist theories of the state, best represented by Ralph Miliband.<sup>91</sup> For instrumentalists, the state is a neutral instrument that holds power in the apparatus itself. It is a tool used by the ruling class in order to pursue their own interests. Though not functionalist, this instrumentalist definition rests on the idea that the state is a thing that can be used to perform a specific task. Its function as an instrument is its definition. In this way, one could argue that despite his rejection of the instrumentalists' and public debates with Miliband, Poulantzas' later work functioned within an instrumentalist mode of thought. Instead of rejecting instrumentalism as a way of thinking, he instead shifted which concept performed the function of the instrument. Struggle rather than the state is the instrument for Poulantzas. This reading is demonstrated in that Poulantzas' state is usually a moment of more or less fixity, the effect. Thus the state is a materialization and condensation of struggles,<sup>92</sup> and popular struggles are inscribed into the state.<sup>93</sup> The state is not simply a relation,<sup>94</sup> it is also a distinct effect of a distinct social relation that serves as an instrument: struggle.

This reading is perhaps a bit unkind to Poulantzas' conception of the state as the materialization and condensation of struggle.<sup>95</sup> If this is so, the instrumentalist notion of struggle is more apparent in his thought concerning the road to socialism. Since the state is a condensation of struggle, Poulantzas believes that proletariats have already made real

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<sup>91</sup> Clyde W. Barrow, *Critical Theories of the State: Marxist, Neomarxist, Postmarxist*, 1st ed. (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 13–50.

<sup>92</sup> Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, 128.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>94</sup> This claim that the state is a social relation was developed later by Bob Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State*, 6.

<sup>95</sup> I think that the instrumentalist view may be overcome within Poulantzas' framework if one simply posits that is the nature of classes. Struggle is the nature of a capitalist and classed society, not an instrument. I have no claims of a critique.

gains and are inscribed within the state. The state is not impenetrable, or totally dominated by capitalist logic, but must be taken through the means of struggle (an instrument). Struggle is the means to socialism.

But within these multiple ways that struggle may be conceived within dialectical and Marxist thought, it seems that the cause or condition of struggle is its most fundamental distinction. For Marxists (instrumentalists), struggle is the result of the capitalist relations of production (ROP) and is therefore dependent on the existence of those relations, on a capitalist society. However, this limits us from conceiving of struggle beyond the bounds of capitalist ROP, which forces us to ask if struggle can be conceptualized as existing outside of capitalism *per se*? and what does a notion of struggle dependent on the ROP do for our understandings of citizenship and political action?

With these questions in mind let's return to Poulantzas's work, which gives insight into how dialectical struggle engages the assumptions of separation, while also providing potential to move beyond certain ideas of inclusion/exclusion. If the state is the condensation and materialization of struggle, and class delineates his use of struggle, then this is not struggle between citizens of a polity. Rather, it is a struggle that is an inherent result of the ROP, which include all involved in the economic relations of a society. In this way citizens and non-citizens are *already* materially present within the state itself. The state cannot exclude non-citizens because by existing in the struggle that makes up the state, one is included within that state. Yet we must also remember the transcendent element in dialectical struggle. While I stated earlier that Poulantzas' conception of transcendence in the dialectic seems to be weaker than Hegel's, I do not think that means



we can write it off in his thought. It is still the state that is the primary object of concern for Poulantzas and through this precise struggle the capitalist state itself may be transcended to reach the socialist state. Further it is only through economic struggle that the gap between state and society is bridged in the first place. In this way it seems that dialectical struggle performs a similar bridging function that citizenship does in the assumptions of separation. In both of these cases, the theories begin by assuming a separation that they then claim to be able to bridge. Dialectical struggle bridges this separation through the movement of contradiction.

But if this how a conception of struggle conditioned by the ROP engages political action and assumptions of separation, what potential is there to expand this conception of struggle, which overcomes the separation between the state and society, beyond the ROP? To expand our notion of dialectical struggle, it is helpful to turn to Henri Lefebvre's idea of the production of space and his dialectical thought more generally. For Lefebvre, spaces such as cities are not simply the passive backdrop for human actions, but are created through processes like urban planning, everyday practices, and lived reality.<sup>96</sup> He refers to this tripartite division of space as perceived, conceived, and lived, which corresponds to his additional description of space as spatial practice, representations of space, and spaces of representation. While Marxist, Lefebvre's important contribution for our purposes is that he opens up the production of space beyond the ROP. He does this in a few different ways. First, he expands the number of elements at work in struggle from two to three from the bourgeois vs. the proletariat to the relationships and tensions between conceived, perceived, and lived space. By doing this, I think he opens the potential to take the conception of struggle out of dialectical

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<sup>96</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 1st ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 1992).

thought because direct contradiction and opposition (A/-A) is not possible between three elements, either two of the elements would be reduced into one or you would have to accept that all three are *different* rather than opposing. In addition to this disruption of contradiction within struggle, Lefebvre eradicates the synthetic term, as it is contradiction that moves towards this term and drives the synthesis. In doing this, Lefebvre takes the necessity of contradiction and synthesis out of struggle, and dramatically opens the idea in terms of what elements are part of it and how it occurs.

This is partially what Stuart Elden talks about in explaining the dialectic in Lefebvre's thought. He says that early in his career, Lefebvre understood the third term "as being the result of the dialectic, its product."<sup>97</sup> Yet later he begins to have a different understanding, as evidenced in *The Production of Space*, in which "the three affect each other simultaneously – not prioritizing one term over the another, and not looking for transcendence, a synthesis, a negation, but seeing the continual movement between them."<sup>98</sup> Further, Elden claims that Lefebvre does not actually introduce the third term into the dialectic as much as recognize the three that were always present within Hegel (thesis, antithesis, synthesis). It is precisely this movement that Elden points to in Lefebvre's development that I am claiming creates the potential of dialectical struggle to break of the conditions of the ROP, and possibly out of dialectical thought more generally.

This liberating movement is that of pulling the third term down from its transcendent position (which is also erasing the gap between content and form or space and the Idea) and instead positing it in simultaneous relation with the two other terms. By

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<sup>97</sup> Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 36.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

turning away from the transcendence of the dialectic, Lefebvre also creates the possibility of conceptualizing a non-transcendent movement and more importantly a non-transcendent politics. Turning away from transcendence he is therefore able to reassert the body into politics through the production of space.<sup>99</sup> This rejects the claims of Aristotle that the power to be political depends on the ability of the soul to dominate the body and therefore be able to transcend to the political sphere. The body's presence and movement in space is political through its production of space. It is the movement through and production of space *itself* that becomes important and is politicized rather than its transcendence to the state, which is more the claim of both Poulantzas and Aristotle.

But it is also important to consider some of the implications of getting rid of transcendence and synthesis while simultaneously maintaining dialectical thought. While transcendence emphasized the temporal movement of becoming, simultaneity emphasizes the spatial movement between things. Such a switch to simultaneity and the spatial often results through taking already predefined things, positing them as processes and then investigating their relation to each other.<sup>100</sup> Thus the things that are posited as process are not truly "things" in a static sense but they are the methodological starting from which we begin to make "things" previously understood as static and distinct, now understood as process and movement. Methodologically, this starting point creates the logical question of, how and why do things relate? This is why contradiction is still important to the dialectical thought of Lefebvre in which movement of simultaneous relation replaces that

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<sup>99</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, "Bodies-Cities," in *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 1995), 104–110; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 169–228; Kirsten Simonsen, "Bodies, Sensations, Space and Time: The Contribution From Henri Lefebvre," *Geografiska Annaler* 87, no. 1 (2005): 1–14.

<sup>100</sup> Harvey, "On Fatal Flaws and Fatal Distractions"; Jones and Goodwin, "Dialectics and Difference."

of a transcendent forward movement. This will become important for comparing dialectical struggle with struggle-as-growth because even if the historical element is taken into account,<sup>101</sup> the dialectical method without teleology cannot provide an adequate account of the forward moving force of time. Instead, contradiction seems to prioritize a method in which we must largely accept predefined things, posit them as processes, and research their relations. It is this prioritization of already existing “things” that convinces us to again think of their relations as oppositional. Yet even though Lefebvre remained a dialectical materialist throughout his career, I do not think that he forces us into this position. Like I argued earlier, he offers a way out of dialectical thought because the relation between perceived, conceived, and lived space can be perceived as difference rather than contradiction. But how could we understand struggle as a movement of differentiation rather than opposition? This is what my next section explores.

## II: Erasing the Gap

In seeking a different conception of struggle to situate our assumptions about politics and research questions, I will explore what happens if instead of thinking opposition and synthesis as primary characteristics of struggle we think of reduction and dissociation as its keywords. This will be done through the work of Henri Bergson and Friedrich Nietzsche, who will push struggle beyond a dialectical understanding to one that is active and works with the movement of life, I call this struggle-as-growth.

I divide this exploration of struggle-as-growth into three sections. The first two sections frame our engagement with dialectical struggle by considering its dominant

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<sup>101</sup> And of course Lefebvre does concern himself with history in rhythmanalysis.; Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 169–191.

characteristics of the subject and contradiction, the third section engages with struggle itself and seeks to elaborate this condition within which to ask the question of action. Through this process, I use Bergson's and Nietzsche's thought in order to elaborate the two key claims of this chapter: first, reduction rather than addition is the condition of intellect, subjectivity, and political concepts; second, things (bodies) relate through dissociation rather than association. As I hope to show, these claims enable us to overcome negative and reactive conceptions of struggle and create the possibility for a new and active conception of struggle-as-growth.

### *The Subject*

For me, the concept of the subject is important to consider because of its parallels with the conceptualization of citizenship. Thus while both come from very different discursive fields, they have a tendency to be prioritized as unique sources of action and struggle. As I elaborated in the first chapter, traditional notions of politics and democracy conceive the citizen as the primary actor, the one who can vote because of their status or who performs some sort of communitarian ideal.<sup>102</sup> What is interesting about these conceptions is that the political, or citizen subjectivity, becomes an addition to the body. Thus through a legal status that grants me protections from the state and the right to vote I become more than I was before, or, by performing some ideal of citizenship I reach a preconceived state that is higher than my previous state. This mode of thought is also actualized in appropriations of the idea of bare life, in which a person is reduced to a bare

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<sup>102</sup> Gershon Shafir, *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, 1st ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

and abject state when the sovereign takes away the addition of the law and rights, made into the inverse of the citizen.<sup>103</sup>

Moving back to the issue of struggle, I think we can suggest that the volitional subject and the voting law protected citizen tend to be thought of as primary in struggle because of the addition that perception, intellect and subjectivity provide. This mode of thought is also apparent in Marxism through ideas of class and class-consciousness.<sup>104</sup> For Marxists the capitalist class, aware of its interests and position, exploit the proletariat who must assume a class-consciousness to effectively engage in class struggle.<sup>105</sup> This means it is through the addition of consciousness and especially an understanding of history as class struggle that revolution becomes possible. Thus, in these parallel examples, the intellect, law, and consciousness add to human bodies and create subjects, citizens, and class members in the process. Further, these additions to bodies become primary in struggle by virtue of the “uniqueness” of the intellect that created them. This is precisely where the thought of Bergson and Nietzsche intervenes by contending the claim that the intellect, law, and consciousness are unique additions to reality. To consider these contributions, I will explore the understanding of perception, consciousness, and the intellect within their work.

Bergson’s understanding of perception and his critique of idealism and realism is a good place to start the exploration of consciousness. In the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* Bergson deals extensively with this issue of perception and its relation to matter.

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<sup>103</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*. Nicholas De Genova, “The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement,” in *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement*, ed. Nicholas De Genova and Nathalie Peutz (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2010). Mountz, *Seeking Asylum*.

<sup>104</sup> Though not important for the argument of this essay, it is interesting to note that there has been work on rethinking class as a subject position. J.K. Gibson-Graham, *Class And Its Others*, 1st ed. (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2000).

<sup>105</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 50.

For Bergson the universe is an aggregate of images that are determined by natural laws, meaning that the relations between these images are in principle totally predictable and determinate.<sup>106</sup> However, within this world of determinate relations, indeterminacy is introduced through perception by bodies, or, the insinuation of life into the smallest element of material indetermination to create freedom for itself. At this point, Bergson's thought arises no serious challenge to notions of perception and consciousness as additions to reality. Indeed one could possibly read these ideas as more ambivalent statements about the uniqueness of the mind due to its ability to add to the universe and create indeterminacy. They might say, as Marx did, it is only through additions made by consciousness, perception, and the intellect that the staleness and determination of the universe is broken and taken to a higher level.<sup>107</sup> However, this is not the direction that Bergson takes. The crucial step he makes that avoids this line of thought is the claim that the psychic is always geared towards use, or action, a conclusion he comes to through an inquiry into perception and the body.<sup>108</sup>

Bergson begins this investigation into perception by saying that the body is a single moving perspective among a universe of images, which goes against forms of idealism that claim the universe is contained within the brain.<sup>109</sup> It is a part of the material world, meaning that it cannot perceive the material world in its entirety. This means that in the most basic sense, perception from a single perspective among a universe of images is always partial. Such a claim lays the groundwork for thinking about perception and consciousness as processes of reduction of the universe and matter rather than addition,

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<sup>106</sup> Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 18.

<sup>107</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 50.

<sup>108</sup> Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 16.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

because the body perceives from a single moving perspective that cannot grasp the universe in its entirety. Yet, even the situated perception of the body is not enough to fully discredit ideas that perception and consciousness are processes of addition to reality. One can imagine a claim that despite the fact my perception cannot grasp the universe of images in its entirety, that with any single image, my perception fully grasps it and transforms it through the addition of my intellect. But in asking and answering the question of “how and why an image is chosen to form part of my perception while an infinite number of other images remain excluded from it,”<sup>110</sup> Bergson counters any idea that perception is part of a process of addition by saying we only perceive that in matter which is useful to us for action. It is through this question then that we best understand the necessity of action, rather than veracity, in thinking about perception. Yet the question also allows us to point towards the effects of thinking about perception and consciousness as an addition or reduction of reality. The process of perception and consciousness as an addition is oriented towards speculation while the process of perception and consciousness as a subtraction is oriented towards action. This is partially what is at stake in our conception of struggle, whether it is a concept of continuous growth and action or if it is directed towards speculation and likely a pre-conceived state that is presumably the end point. It is a question of how open ended the concept of struggle will become.

As I have tried to show in my rendering of Bergson’s thought, perception is a reduction of reality oriented towards action and not speculation.<sup>111</sup> The claim is that we perceive only what is useful to us, that which enables our unpredictable action in the

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 72.



otherwise determinate relations of matter. Further this fundamentally alters an understanding of our mind in perception and consciousness, no longer does it translate what it perceives into pure knowledge for speculation (as idealism and realism postulate),<sup>112</sup> but it is a cerebral mass that prolongs, complexifies, and makes indeterminate our reactions to stimulus. This is the other part of what is at stake in a reductive or additive conception of perception and speculation, our understanding of the condition and limits of our knowledge and intellect. Therefore, if we understand our consciousness and thought as oriented towards speculation when it is really oriented to action we are bound to state false problems. For example, if citizenship is conceived as resulting from an addition to the material universe by virtue of speculative thought, then the noncitizen is in the position of being less than citizen.<sup>113</sup> It is likely to be stated then that *the* problem is the absence of citizenship, which makes one less. However, this is a falsely stated problem because the noncitizen, in reality, is not less than the citizen but more since they do not act through the reductions of citizenship. Meaning that citizenship itself is always a reduction because its actualization necessitates an enclosure and defining of what it is, or simply why it is citizenship rather than non-citizenship. In this way, the actualization of citizenship is a reduction because the number of potential ways that it could have been actualized but was not is greater than the singular actualized form. In other words, the potentials that are excluded from any actualized form of citizenship are in excess of that which is actualized.

This is of course not to say that those without documents should not struggle for the protections of legal status or citizenship, indeed it is an important and necessary fight.

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>113</sup> As evidenced in the term noncitizen itself, which defines a person by what they are not.

Rather, the problem is that stated falsely, their struggles are framed as a movement towards the addition of citizenship, towards already established values rather than the creation of values. There is further evidence of this point within my fieldwork with migrant labor organizing groups in New Jersey. Through interviews and participant observation it seemed that the “ideal” of citizenship itself was curiously absent while talk of social security numbers, immigration reform, and the precocity of undocumented status were much more prevalent. In this way it seems hard to argue that citizenship is the value that is desired or being performed by those not legally recognized. Rather we could just as easily say that migrants are actively creating communities and lives within these situations and it is citizenship and legal status that are the reactive forces attempting to either mediate these actions into ideals of citizenship, stifle their growth, or simply can’t recognize them all together. However, it is hard to come to such a conclusion if citizenship is posited as an addition because it falsely states the problem and only recognizes the reactive. I will show this in more detail later in the section on contradiction.

Through this first chapter of *Matter and Memory* then, I have followed Bergson’s tracing of two possible ways to think about perception and intellect as a process and his argument for a conception of perception and intellect as a reduction, and the prolongation of that reduction, oriented towards action. What is at stake for our conception of struggle in these readings is both the open-endedness of action and the statement of problems in a way that is true, as Deleuze’s reading of Bergson emphasizes, and recognizes activity rather than only reactivity.<sup>114</sup> While I gave an example about the importance of stating

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<sup>114</sup> Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, chap. 1.

true questions, Nietzsche underscores the importance of action and what it does for us in thinking about reduction within struggle.<sup>115</sup>

Nietzsche takes up the importance of reduction for action in *On the Utility and Liability of History for Life*. The similarities of Nietzsche's approach to history are striking when juxtaposed with Bergson's discussion of perception and matter. While Bergson talks of matter as being governed by laws and completely determinate in principle, he is speaking of matter as being determinate without life. This is to say that it is through reductive perception that bodily action occurs, and a total or non-reductive perception would debilitate this movement. In a parallel way Nietzsche says that at some level we must limit and reduce our knowledge of history in order to act. In principle, a total and scientific memory would debilitate action in the same way that a total perception of the qualities and relation of matter debilitates action. It is this debilitating kind of history that Nietzsche works against: "there is a degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of historical sensibility, that injures and ultimately destroys all living things."<sup>116</sup> In order act and to use history for life then, it is not a matter of aggregating all of our knowledge of history in order to avoid repeating the same mistakes. Life does not require the addition of all historical knowledge, to have complete knowledge of the past would absorb one's life and not leave room for the future. On the other hand, some amount of reduction and forgetting is necessary for life and action as it is the only way to make room for the future: "It is possible to live almost without memory, indeed, to live happily, as the animals show us; but without forgetting, it is utterly impossible to live at

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<sup>115</sup> This is in addition to the open-endedness that I have already claimed an orientation to action brings to the concept of struggle.

<sup>116</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Utility and Liability of History for Life," in *Unfashionable Observations: Volume 2* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 89.

all.<sup>117</sup> In this way, Nietzsche shows us the importance of the reduction of history and the past for life. However, Nietzsche pushes us much farther beyond this base observation of reduction as benefitting life by asking the question of how we reduce rather than if we reduce. The fact that we reduce is evident when we act. However, Nietzsche points out that this action can work against life if it works towards a total or complete understanding of history. This is where he suggests we need adequate portions of three different types of history: monumental, antiquarian, and critical.<sup>118</sup> It is through the balance of these types of history that we may recreate it for the purposes of life and use knowledge to benefit life.

The movement of consciousness is interesting in this discussion of history and comes up nicely as Nietzsche talks about resistance. In regards to consciousness, I think Nietzsche is saying that in order to use the reductions we undertake for the purposes of life, we must become conscious of these reductions. Or to recognize the fact that to undertake an action is to simultaneously undertake a reduction. In this way we can recognize our consciousness itself as perspectival and limited, which keeps us from universalizing our singular perspective and posing false problems. To some degree this is what Bergson is saying about stating true questions, that our ability to state questions correctly hinges upon our understanding of perception and intellect as reductions oriented towards action. For both, this consciousness is important because it enables us to understand the limits of our intellect and knowledge, both of which work against the continuous and creative movement of life when taken beyond their limits. I explicated an example of this with the idea of citizenship above.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 96.

Illustrating this point, Nietzsche talks about education and how current education serves to create a “historically and aesthetically cultivated philistine”<sup>119</sup> that is scientifically oriented and outside of life. In this context it is the instincts of youth, who have not been fully cultivated by this form of education, that unconsciously resist a scientifically minded understanding of history. Thus by the instinctual and active force of life that comes from within us we unconsciously resist that which works against life. But this unconscious resistance is not enough for Nietzsche, instead “anyone who, in turn, seeks to break this education must help youth express itself, must help illuminate, with the lucidity of concepts, the path of their unconscious resistance against this education and transform it into an aware and outspoken consciousness.”<sup>120</sup> In this way, Nietzsche seems to be saying that the force and growth of life is always within us, like will to power, but there is something about becoming conscious of that force which makes it more powerful within us, enabling us to use this force for our own activities. It is almost as if becoming conscious of it enables the force to dominate us in a way not previously possible, and allows us to use tools like history that previously inhibited growth, for the action and growth of life. We seem to come full circle, back to the importance of consciousness but in a very different way. Whereas before, in Marx, consciousness was important as an addition to reality created through the intellect, now consciousness becomes the recognition that our perception and intellect are reductions oriented towards action. This new form of consciousness is the way we become oriented towards and with

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

the movement of life rather than against it, by destroying the belief in the necessity of this previous conception of consciousness and the education that it created.<sup>121</sup>

In traditional conceptions of politics discussed in the first chapter, consciously created concepts and ideals are conceived as forming through intellectual additions to reality. They claim something like perception is oriented towards, conditions, the transformation of matter through the intellect and speculation by creating ends and goals. Through this process of the unique human mind, they claim, that a subject (such as a citizen) is created as more than they previously were. This leads to a conception of struggle that prioritizes the subject as the primary actor in conflict. Against this mode of thought, Nietzsche and Bergson suggest that the subject is created through reduction rather than addition. Perception itself is not oriented towards speculation but action and becoming conscious of this fact enables one to move and act with life rather than against it. Fundamentally then, the difference between thinking about the subject as an addition or reduction is the difference between working with or against life as continuous growth and action. Further the subject is no longer primary in struggle as bodies only serve to introduce indeterminacy into determinate relations. This indeterminacy is introduced through the prolongation of the interval between stimulus and reaction, not through transformation. Instead of the subject then, I think something like the force of life becomes primary in struggle. For Nietzsche this is will to power<sup>122</sup> and for Bergson this is the original impetus of life.<sup>123</sup> I will deal with these issues in greater depth in the section on struggle, for now it is enough to say that the subject is a reduction and this alters the way we think about struggle in three primary ways: reduction creates a more open-ended

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche And Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), chap. 3.

<sup>123</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 97.

concept than addition, the recognition of this reduction is necessary to state true problems (especially concerning inquiries about political concepts in struggle, i.e. citizenship) that move with rather than against life, reduction decenters the subject which allows for the primacy of the force of life and a conception of struggle as continuous growth.

### ***Contradiction***

While the primacy of the subject in struggle is disrupted through Bergson and Nietzsche, there is another concept central to understandings of struggle that is challenged by their work, contradiction. This concept of contradiction is most apparent, and important, in Marxist conceptions of struggle. Deriving from dialectical modes of thought, for Marxists, struggle is conceived as the contradictory movement of a thesis and antithesis towards a synthesis. Thus using again the relations of production as an example, the bourgeois and the proletariat are antithetical and the synthesis of their struggle results in effects such as the state, or something along these lines. In addition, these ways of conceiving struggle have permeated thinking in geography about the occurrence of politics and especially the production of space. Thus public space is often conceived as the effect of the contradictory struggle of the state and the people or anti-democratic and democratic forces.<sup>124</sup> But does the idea of struggle depend on the concept of contradiction? I believe Nietzsche and Bergson provide alternatives for thinking about struggle.

The idea of contradiction is important for the concept of struggle and politics more generally because of the two questions it answers in an interesting way: how do things relate? and why do things relate? Contradiction becomes an interesting and

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<sup>124</sup> Mitchell, *The Right to the City*.

appealing answer to these questions of political concepts such as democracy and community because it provides a way out of liberal thought for folks more radically oriented. Thus a liberal thinker may answer these two questions saying that in democracy things relate and should relate through rational deliberation<sup>125</sup> and that this deliberation occurs because rational actors have decided that they are better off in an association rather than in the state of nature where life is nasty, brutish, and short. Contradiction on the other hand suggests that things do not relate through the thread of reason but through opposition. Further, the reason that the relation exists to begin with is because of the opposition, not an agreed upon benefit of association for the members. It is therefore posited that contradiction has the quality of attraction between two things. In response to these contributions of the idea of contradiction for thinking about relations, I think Nietzsche and to some extent Bergson would ask, what is the *value* (and repulsion) of assuming or thinking about struggle in terms of contradiction?

To answer this question of the value of understanding struggle as contradiction, Nietzsche's discussion of slave morality in *On the Genealogy of Morality* seems to be an obvious starting point. In this text Nietzsche demonstrates how movements of opposition are commonly reactive. Thus the noble one "conceives of the basic idea 'good' by himself, in advance and spontaneously, and only then creates a notion of 'bad'!"<sup>126</sup> This is what Nietzsche says is an active creation, one that does not occur in the moment of opposition as contradiction and dialectical thought suggest. Contrasting this noble understanding of creation Nietzsche suggests that the "reversal of the evaluating glance ... is a feature of *ressentiment*: in order to come about, slave morality first has to have an

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<sup>125</sup> Habermas, Jürgen, "Three Normative Models of Democracy."

<sup>126</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche: "On the Genealogy of Morality" and Other Writings: Revised Student Edition*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 22.



opposing, external world, it needs ... external stimuli in order to act at all, - its action is basically a reaction."<sup>127</sup> Thus, as may be obvious to those familiar with Nietzsche, he is saying that to act in opposition or contradiction of something is reactive. This is the definition of reactive and must be part of the valuation of contradiction within struggle. Thus I think we can read Nietzsche as saying something like, opposition is a reactive force within struggle and to the extent that contradiction dominates the idea of struggle it makes the concept of struggle itself reactive. Identifying contradiction as reactive is then only part of the evaluation of the concept and we must now move on to ask what other forces are at work within struggle and why have they not been recognized?

Deleuze provides some insight into the second part of this question, why reactive forces appear to dominate our understandings of struggle. It is partially because the scientific outlook always tries "to interpret phenomena in terms of reactive forces,"<sup>128</sup> meaning that the sciences of man facilitate the "misrecognition of action, of all that is active" by only measuring the reactive. Further, this misrecognition produced by the scientific outlook results from judging the utility of a phenomena not by the one who acts but a "third party, the sufferer or the spectator." Thus the spectator observing a particular struggle makes the concept of struggle reactive by defining it in terms of contradiction. The geographer observing a struggle over public space who analyzes it in terms of contradiction interprets it in way that makes the reactive dominant in the analysis. The good part is that the concept struggle itself is not fundamentally reactive, but made reactive through a "scientific" outlook or mode of analyzing politics in which a third

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>128</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche And Philosophy*, 73.

party utilizes contradiction as an analytical tool. I return now to the first part of my earlier question, what forces other than contradiction are at work in struggle?

Bergson and Nietzsche provide understandings of the other forces at work in struggle through ideas that I broadly categorize as difference, dissociation, and the internal will to grow. To address these contributions I will explore how they answer the two questions of how things relate and why things relate differently than contradiction. In thinking about how things relate to each other, and more specifically relate to each other in struggle, it seems the primary contribution Nietzsche and Bergson have to make is to suggest that this relation occurs through the growth of different internal forces and the resulting movement outwards of this growth. This lies in stark contrast to the idea of contradiction where things (forces) do not relate through their own outward growth but rather in direct opposition to each other. At this early stage of the inquiry then it becomes apparent that this alternative understanding of how things relate brings to light active forces within struggle. What is interesting about this though, in perhaps a Bergsonian way, is that this idea of relation through growth does not fit within either the liberal framework of isolated individuals who would be free to grow based on their internal drive without external restraint, nor the dialectical framework in which relation is directly correlated with the opposition of an external element. It is neither a relation of harmony or contradiction. Perhaps Bergson speaks of this relation best when he talks about creative evolution,<sup>129</sup> but thinking of it in evolutionary or even Malthusian terms one can see how something like a body's internal will to grow cannot eternally grow unhindered due to the finite nature of matter, resources, and the mortal form of bodies. This is of course the basis of natural selection and demonstrates how struggle itself can still occur

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<sup>129</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*.

through active growth rather than reactive contradiction. But until this point I have started at the assumption of things and asked how they relate. To answer the question of why things relate, Bergson and Nietzsche do not begin with assumed or established things whose relation to other things must be explained. Rather, they look to the forces that create the thing to begin with.

To frame the contribution of Bergson and Nietzsche within the question of why things relate, let's first recap how the idea of contradiction answers these questions. As mentioned earlier, contradiction posits attraction as a quality of this relation. Thus two things do not simply relate to one another by chance but because they are opposites, because they contradict. In this way contradiction is perhaps a cause of a relation, or relations, such as a human association. A reason people may even bother to relate and associate with others is because they have contradictory wills, ideas, desires, etc... over a common issue or resource. However, not only does contradiction claim to have attraction as a primary element of itself, but this explanation stays within the realm of the established present, taking the opposition of things as a given and using this given relation as an explanation. However this is not adequate for the thought of Bergson and Nietzsche. Looking for an answer to this question in their work I do not think it is possible to start at the point of established things and then ask, why do these things relate? Instead they would ask something like what are the forces constituting the things under consideration? In effect, they make this inquiry a question of methodology just as much as anything else and force us to consider the point before any given state rather than that state itself and after.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche And Philosophy*, 1–3; Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, chap. 1.

In this move that Bergson and Nietzsche force us to take, the question of why things relate almost become irrelevant. Instead, relation is the assumed starting point rather than a problem to be answered. Bergson demonstrates this in two different ways. First is that the relation of things through natural laws is the determinate and predictable condition onto which bodies and life introduce and extract indeterminacy.<sup>131</sup> This means that the universe in its fullness and determinate relation is the starting point from which Bergson begins and it is actually action and the reduction of those relations through perception that must be explained. This is a reversal of the work contradiction does in terms of what is under inquiry and what must be explained, instead of relations themselves needing to be explained it is reduction and ignorance of those relations that needs explanation. Second, relation can be explained by Bergson through common descent, hence the idea of creative evolution and his use of the sheaf as imagery.<sup>132</sup> What the idea of creative evolution does is begin by claiming a single impulse that grows through differentiation rather than distinct entities whose relation is explained through contradiction.<sup>133</sup> It is the making of distinct entities into symptoms or expressions of a single force. This is part of what Bergson is stating when he says that “Life does not proceed by the association and addition of elements, but by dissociation and division.”<sup>134</sup> Thus Bergson challenges the interpretation of contradiction in two ways by questioning that there are two opposite things whose relation must be explained and that the relation itself is one of association. I will argue that thinking about how and why things relate as dissociation is a key contribution that Bergson and Nietzsche have to offer the idea of

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<sup>131</sup> Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, chap. 1.

<sup>132</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 109.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

struggle. For Nietzsche a similar contribution is found in the concept of will to power, which is “the employment and exercise of power as a creative drive.”<sup>135</sup> Will to power is then another way of thinking about the assumed starting point I mentioned earlier, it is the force that drives differentiation and dissociation of things as they manifest power or express their will to be more. It is the same explanation that Bergson gave in terms of how and why things relate, though he refers to it as the original impetus of life in *Creative Evolution*. I refer to this general contribution of Bergson and Nietzsche as dissociation as I now turn to deal with the concept of struggle itself.

### ***Struggle***

“All events, all motion, all becoming, as a determination of degrees and relations of force, as a *struggle*.”<sup>136</sup>

In contrast to the idea of struggle that prioritizes the subject as the primary actor and posits contradiction as a force of association, I have argued that Bergson and Nietzsche provide a way to rethink the idea of struggle through the concepts reduction and dissociation. The quote above is an attempt to frame the importance of struggle not just as concept for its own sake, but rather, as important for thinking about “all events, all motion, [and] all becoming.” Thus not only can struggle be rethought in a way that facilitates action, life, and becoming, but an understanding of becoming, growth, and will to power need something like a concept of struggle. Though not intentional, it seems that to some extent my exploration of reduction and dissociation is an exploration of the determination of degrees (addition v. reduction) and the relations of force (association v. dissociation) that Nietzsche speaks of. I am not suggesting that the work I have done in

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<sup>135</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage, 1968), 333.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

this chapter is to expound on Nietzsche's definition of struggle in this quote, which seems to be a methodological starting point. While this starting point is part of what I have discussed in our conception of struggle, the larger project of this chapter was geared more specifically toward thinking through the possibility of an active conception of struggle. The overlap seems to be significant, but the intricacies of how this quote relates to my argument will have to wait until another time.

However, my advocating for struggle as an active concept may not be as simple a move as I have suggested, especially for the thought of Nietzsche. I am thinking specifically of Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche in which he very strongly states that struggle is never active for Nietzsche:

One cannot overemphasize *the extent to which the notions of struggle, war, rivalry or even comparison are foreign to Nietzsche and to his conception of the will to power*. It is not that he denies the existence of struggle: but he does not see it in any way as creative of values. Struggle is not the principle or the motor of hierarchy but the means by which the slave reverse hierarchy. Struggle is never the active expression of forces, nor the manifestation of a will to power that affirms.<sup>137</sup>

This reading directly counters what I have been arguing about struggle, that it may be made an active concept through the work of Nietzsche and Bergson. Indeed, directly confronting such readings of Nietzsche and Bergson seem to be part of Deleuze's larger project, as he explicitly argues against their appropriation as dialectical thinkers.<sup>138</sup>

However, in order to respond to this reading of struggle within Nietzsche, I think we should consider more closely both Nietzsche's and Deleuze's understanding of Darwin as he seems to be the sources of their opposition to struggle.

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<sup>137</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche And Philosophy*, 82.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 8; Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 44.

It is not by accident that later in the paragraph of my previous quote, Deleuze addresses Darwin. He says that the concept of struggle is the reason “why Nietzsche is opposed to Darwin: Darwin confused struggle and selection. He failed to see that the result of struggle was the opposite of what he thought; that it does select, but it selects only the weak and assures their triumph.”<sup>139</sup> However, Nietzsche’s profound critique of Darwin may derive from his interpretation by Darwinists rather than the work of the man himself, which he likely did not read.<sup>140</sup> Through this understanding of Nietzsche’s work in relation to Darwin then, I think we find an opening for the re-appropriation of struggle.

So, what is it about struggle that causes the disapproval of Deleuze and Nietzsche and have the contributions of this essay pointed to a way out of their concerns? Returning to the same paragraph in Deleuze’s text he claims, “it is characteristic of established values to be brought into play in struggle, but it is characteristic of the struggle to be always referred to established values.”<sup>141</sup> Thus Deleuze is claiming that struggle is reactive to the extent it is in reference to established values, the struggle for something already set or determined. The struggle for citizenship is reactive to the extent it is for an already established value, though it may be necessary for after struggles. However, this is exactly what I have argued Bergson and Nietzsche overcome through the idea of struggle as dissociation rather than association. By replacing contradiction with the will to power and the original impetus of life, Bergson and Nietzsche take struggle out of the realm of established values and into that of differentiation, growth, and active creation of values. This is the same kind of idea that we can attribute to Darwin, contra Nietzsche’s reading,

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<sup>139</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche And Philosophy*, 82.

<sup>140</sup> On this point and for a much more in depth investigation of a Nietzschean appropriation of Darwin see Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Duke University Press Books, 2004), chap. 4.

<sup>141</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche And Philosophy*, 82.

as a thinker of differentiation and creation through the idea of evolution, a reading of evolution brought to fruition by Bergson in *Creative Evolution*. Having seen how struggle can be reclaimed from reactive readings, I now consider how ideas of reduction and dissociation imply the concept of struggle. These last few paragraphs attempt to make clear the relation between reduction, dissociation, and struggle as all active concepts that allow us to think about and engage the relations of forces.

The key contribution from the first section on the subject was that perception, the intellect, and concepts are always reductions of reality rather than transformations or additions. This is a reduction oriented towards action, meaning we perceive and conceive of matter in ways oriented towards our use of that matter. That reduction is oriented towards action is what necessitates a concept of struggle. This is because a reduction oriented to action is a reduction oriented to movement and growth, or, the original impulse of life found in all living things. However, these living and growing bodies exist in a world of finite matter and resources. Meaning, the growth of individual bodies cannot take place in isolation but eventually relate to other bodies and matter through competition over resources and struggle. Thus, action produced by reduction creates competition between a multiplicity of bodies that all have this impulse of action and growth. In other words, because reduction is oriented towards action and life, competition is inevitable and we need a conception of struggle. This not only accounts for the necessity of struggle but also begins the formation of struggle as active. Struggle as the competition of growing bodies.

However, I will push the activity that reduction brings to struggle further by considering how reduction enables bodies to grow. Perception, memory, and action are



important in this equation because they introduce indeterminacy into a principally determinate universe. If we trace the movement of my thought then, perception and memory necessitate the idea of struggle because they introduce indeterminacy, action, and growth into determinate relations. In turn this makes struggle not only the outcome of indeterminate relations, but also a condition upon which indeterminate relations exist and creation is possible. There is a strong link between struggle and indeterminacy that allows for creation, that recognizes the future as open-ended. Indeterminacy is also a reason why it is key to think reduction rather than addition as a dominant characteristic of struggle. It is how we avoid the finalism Bergson worked so hard against in *Creative Evolution*. Addition in this context seems to have an affinity with finalism, with the movement of struggle as a trajectory towards an end state. In the example of citizenship, this may manifest itself by thinking about the struggle of non-citizens as always towards citizenship. In effect, only recognizing the reactive rather than active forces. Reduction on the other hand has an open-endedness that addition does not have. There is nothing that reduction is oriented towards other than action and indeterminacy, which is the condition of creation rather than the end goal. In this way reduction necessitates struggle while at the same time linking it to indeterminacy and creation in way that addition cannot.

Turning to the idea of dissociation, it seems to be the same sort of Malthusian logic that leads to struggle. As evolution involves growth and dissociation, there inevitably comes a point of competition over finite resources between individuating bodies. However, an aspect that dissociation contributes to this formula that reduction does not is an explanation of differentiation. Differentiation is of course necessary, as a

single entity does not compete with itself but rather with others that are also acting.<sup>142</sup> Dissociation is how a common progenitor, and a singular will, can account for the multiplicity of entities that exist and are struggling today. Thus, a dissociation that differentiates into entities and bodies that live in a finite world eventually results in the condition of struggle. The forces that constitute struggle are therefore growth and differentiation through a dissociation guided by the common force of life or a multiplicity of wills to power. Understood in this way, struggle is fundamentally an active concept that is stated falsely and leads to false problems when conceived reactively in terms of addition and contradiction.

### III: Conclusion

Having argued for an active conception of struggle based on reduction and dissociation, I feel obligated to bring this discussion to a close by tying it back in with the narrative of my thesis. While the idea of struggle is relevant in a variety of settings, including evolution, I have been motivated by its political import. Indeed I feel it is a fundamental concept for thinking about politics and that it lies at the core of many less abstract ideas such as citizenship, the state, and democracy. Thus if my first chapter sought to begin disentangling the question of action from that of citizenship, then this chapter has sought to create a conception of struggle within which we can re-situate the question of action and also concerns with citizenship.

In this regard, I find it interesting how this understanding of politics differs from Agamben with the state of exception and especially the conceptualization of (bare) life. It

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<sup>142</sup> Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, chap. 5.

seems to be the difference between thinking of citizenship and the law as an addition to bodies that is then controlled by a sovereign (Agamben) or as a reduction of bodies for specific purposes and uses (Nietzsche and Bergson). This distinction makes all the difference when thinking about the noncitizen and their exclusion from politics, such as the idea of inclusion/exclusion itself. Thus, by thinking in terms of addition, political action is relegated to the realm of the citizen. This realm of the citizen and the political is higher than simple bodies acting and deems the action of noncitizens as apolitical by the absence of legal status. However, from the standpoint of reduction, we can more easily say something like citizenship is only one mode of political action and not even the primary mode at that.<sup>143</sup> This enables a re-evaluation of how politics occur that does not simply measure the reactive but makes room for the active.

The tension between these broadly different ways of conceiving politics and the noncitizen have played out in rather interesting ways within political struggles around migration and in particular the migrant as either an object of capital within employment and migration or as a subject capable of action. I have briefly touched on labor issues in the first chapter, but I think that workers centers provide a good example of an understanding of politics that sees workers as *already* political, regardless of legal status, if they can simply organize. This is evident in the methodology of the organizations that I interviewed, which both were driven by a member-run model in which migrant workers were provided with resources to take control of their employment relation, but it was

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<sup>143</sup> This was the crux of my discussion in the first section on the subject, that from the standpoint of reduction the subject is not primary in struggle.

ultimately up to them and not the staff to drive the process.<sup>144</sup> Yet even in labor organizing practices, the role of the noncitizen and their political currency is still debated which sometimes materializes in different tactics of activism,<sup>145</sup> and as Janice Fine makes clear, workers centers have had to deal with an internal tension between providing social services, in which the members are more an object of help, and organizing, in which members become subjects of action by leading and running campaigns.

Another interesting manifestation of this tension between the noncitizen as object (bare life) or subject has been social scientific explanations of migration and the intervention of a body of literature that explores the “autonomy of migration.”<sup>146</sup> Thus while social scientific research on migration has focused on push and pull factors, social networks, or world systems theory, it has done so largely at the expense of the action of the migrant.<sup>147</sup> While there are important exceptions to this, the migrant themselves tend to be conceptualized as an object merely caught in the flow of larger systems. Within this popular and academic understanding both activists and academics have sought to think about migration as political action. One way they do this is almost by reversing the story of globalization claiming that “capital’s global unification – “globalization” – was imposed on it by a widespread refusal and flight of people.”<sup>148</sup> Thus migration becomes

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<sup>144</sup> Fine, *Worker Centers*; Gordon, *Suburban Sweatshops*; Nina Martin, Sandra Morales, and Nik Theodore, “Migrant Worker Centers: Contending with Downgrading in the Low-wage Labor Market,” *GeoJournal* 68 (2007): 155–165.

<sup>145</sup> Alyshia Galvez, “La Virgen Meets Eliot Spitzer: Articulating Labor Rights for Mexican Immigrants,” *Social Text* 24, no. 3 (2006): 99–130.

<sup>146</sup> Sandro Mezzadra, “The Right to Escape,” *Ephemera* 4, no. 3 (2004): 267–75; Angela Mitropoulos, “Autonomy, Recognition, Movement,” *The Commoner* 11 (2006): 5–14; Peter Nyers, “No One Is Illegal Between City and Nation,” in *Acts of Citizenship*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen (New York: Zed Books, 2008), 160–181; “Speaking of Autonomy of Migration... Racism and Struggle of Migration” (n.d.), <http://www.kanak-attak.de/ka/text/esf04.html>; Walters, “Mapping the Territory of (Non-)Citizenship.”

<sup>147</sup> Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation Publications, 2003), chap. 2; Michael Samers, *Migration*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), chap. 2.

<sup>148</sup> Mitropoulos, “Autonomy, Recognition, Movement,” 7.

political in that it is a tactic of escape and simultaneously one of resistance to global capitalism.<sup>149</sup> In this way movement across borders itself becomes a political act in a territorially divided world of sovereign states that must continually reclaim and perform that sovereignty.<sup>150</sup>

The potential that the conception of struggle I have elaborated holds for this literature is that offers a way to conceive of the movement of the body in space as an always relatively autonomous act, and also a way to ask a question about the politics of this action without defining it relative to a transcendental term like citizenship. Migration becomes an act that transgresses our symbolic modes of political thought, organization, and territorialization by always being in excess of these reductions. In addition, I think that such an approach has the potential to push even farther than the autonomy of migration literature by not seeing bodily movement as simply transgressing either capital or state sovereignty but also producing and creating space, which is inherently political. Yet, to undertake such a project necessitates that we not only think the act of migration as autonomous, but also develop an epistemology and methodology that creates space for the self-definition of the migrant, noncitizen, or “political actor.” We need a question that allows the actualization of “movements and struggle as such.”<sup>151</sup>

This is largely what this thesis is undertaking by seeking to pose a question that does not subsume or mediate political action through citizenship. I have argued that a conception of struggle-as-growth is a condition for posing such a question. Further, I think that struggle forces us to ask: How does exclusion occur? Do noncitizens exist in a

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<sup>149</sup> Mezzadra, “The Right to Escape.”

<sup>150</sup> Peter Nyers, “Abject Cosmopolitanism: The Politics of Protection in the Anti-deportation Movement,” *Third World Quarterly* 24, no. 6 (2003): 1069–1093.

<sup>151</sup> Mitropoulos, “Autonomy, Recognition, Movement,” 10.

political void where their bodies have no political effects? Can we subsume their actions and struggles for basic living standards as performances of citizenship (like current scholarship), or is it something completely different? These questions become possible by situating the question of citizenship and action within an understanding of struggle-as-growth. It is with this in mind that in the next chapter I will seek to elaborate a question of action that is different yet necessary for questions of citizenship.

## Chapter 3: The Question of Action

In chapter one, I tried to push citizenship theory to its limits through the problematic of inclusion/exclusion in order to demonstrate the resilience of the assumptions of separation within the question of citizenship. The second chapter elaborated a concept of struggle-as-growth as an alternative to the “question of citizenship” with which to engage politics and re-situate citizenship as one movement among many in political occurrences rather than a privileged framing concept. The goal of this second chapter was to open up the space necessary to pose a question of action, which the current chapter undertakes by disentangling action from the question of citizenship and re-posing it on its own terms, situated within a movement struggle.

I therefore proceed on the tentative assertion that my previous two chapters have achieved their goals. But to pose an alternative question is not to say that concerns with action should somehow replace concerns or research on citizenship. Rather, it is to suggest that they are indeed two very different questions/concepts, and that citizenship research tends to reduce the question of action to something like citizenship or democracy. These two questions must therefore be considered as different yet necessary for each other instead of being conflated. Research on citizenship must recognize the concept’s limits to consider political action beyond the citizen, while a question of action must consider the role of citizenship status along with other factors at work in its movement. This chapter therefore starts by addressing the conception of action within citizenship and democratic theory, it then works through the idea of the right to the city

as a sort of pivot case in the narrative that considers the different ways action could potentially be conceptualized. It concludes by exploring how the question of action might change when considered on its own terms and independently from citizenship.

## **I: Democracy as action**

Viewed through the lens (or question) of citizenship, action is often defined as democracy, which is apparent in my earlier discussion on communitarian and republican theories of citizenship. This is of course not to say that action comes to be defined strictly through formal institutions, but rather that within the question of citizenship certain (democratic) acts come to be privileged and coded as uniquely political. This section therefore considers what acts are privileged by citizenship and *how* they come to be defined as political. I do this by considering the relation between “democratic” acts and space, arguing that space is conceived as a relatively fixed platform upon which the movement and action of democracy occurs. Through this schema then, the only movements considered are democratic acts such as deliberation and protest (social movements), defining them as uniquely political moments.<sup>152</sup> But more than that, by only considering movement or action within such moments as deliberation or protest, action itself has a tendency to be reduced to those particular events and against the backdrop of

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<sup>152</sup> The reverse of this occurs in literature that considers the everyday literature in which the acts of citizenship are potentially spread to any conceivable act and not just deliberation and protest. It remains though that these acts are only thought of as political as they are mediated through citizenship. I have addressed these theories throughout this thesis and I will not be elaborating upon them in this section. However, I contend that the argument of this section applies to them as well.



relatively fixed spaces.<sup>153</sup> To understand this further lets briefly consider what seems to be two paradigmatic moments of democratic action: deliberation and protest.

### *Deliberation, Protest, and Space*

Jürgen Habermas is one the foremost thinkers of the public sphere, which is typically thought of as the space between the state and the market. It is a space where people come together and discuss with one another, forming their ideas and political opinions in the process of deliberation.<sup>154</sup> In these regards there appear to be at least three key aspects to the public sphere and deliberation that make it political. First, the fact that people who are fundamentally different and unique are coming together to talk about public issues and form their opinions on these issues and ideologies more broadly. Second, the fact that there is a material space in which people may come together and deliberate, which for Habermas is the German coffee shop, and lastly, the fact that there are abstract procedures that enable deliberation. Thus the space of the public sphere is not only (or even primarily) the physical place in which deliberation takes place. It is also an abstract space structured by the procedure and criteria of reason. Meaning that an act of being in a particular place and the production of material space is at best of secondary importance and at worst not of any consequence itself. Thus the act of deliberation is the primary (if not only) mode of proper political action. How else could one possibly enter

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<sup>153</sup> This is not to say that these theories think of space literally as fixed or static. In fact I would think that most of them would argue that they are thinking of space as a process. However, in contrast to conceptions of space in the recent flat ontology debates I think we can argue that much public space literature conceives of space as *relatively* more fixed. In geography a much more fluid conception of space is elaborated by; Keith Woodward, John Paul Jones III, and Sallie A Marston, “Of Eagles and Flies: Orientations Toward the Site,” *Area* 42, no. 3 (September 1, 2010): 271–280; Woodward, Jones III, and Marston, “The Politics of Autonomous Space.”

<sup>154</sup> Craig Calhoun, “Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993), 1–48; Habermas, Jürgen, “Three Normative Models of Democracy.”

the abstract procedural realm of the public sphere? And unless the deliberation enters that sphere, that third term or organizing public structure that makes it possible for different people to actually communicate on a plane of equivalence, then deliberation is not itself political. Political action comes from the meeting of deliberation with the procedurally defined public sphere. Yet the actual conditions and production of the material and abstract space are not of primary importance in this schema. They are the relatively static platforms upon which the political act of deliberation may take place. Thus assuming the relatively static quality of the public sphere makes deliberation the only moving element within this schema of normative politics, meaning that action itself becomes conceived as deliberation. Action in the deliberative scheme of citizenship and democracy is the deliberative movement through the static reasonable procedures that makes politics.

Yet while deliberative theorists privilege action like rational and public speech within an abstract procedural sphere, agonistic theories claim that agonistic struggle and protest are necessary aspects of democracy.<sup>155</sup> This loss of consensus in democratic practice that the rational procedure of the public sphere provides is very important for how action is conceived in citizenship. Action is no longer a movement of harmonization, the movement of deliberation through a procedure. Democratic action also has those dissonant moments as well, moments of conflict and contestation that move beyond both deliberation and reason.

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<sup>155</sup> Chantal Mouffe, "Democracy, Power, and the 'Political'," in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 245–56.

In this context, public space often appears as the key site of democratic agonistic action or struggle.<sup>156</sup> It is the site where difference is engaged face to face and conflict can arise without the mediation of rational procedure. However, space in this discourse is often conceived in two ways, that of being a platform for agonistic struggle and that which is struggled over. Thus it is a relatively static state at either the beginning or the end of a process of democratic struggle or action that is reminiscent of the static conception of space within public sphere discourse. However, instead of action being conceived as deliberation it is often seen as protest, such as Seattle in 1998 or the free speech movement at UC Berkeley. Again, as in deliberative ideas of democracy, we see that the only movement within this schema is something like protest or social movements, meaning that not only are these particular acts privileged as uniquely political but that action itself is reduced to these movements. In these ways, by understanding the context within which these actions function as relative fixed both deliberative and protest oriented models of democracy tend to conceive of action itself as deliberation or protest.

### *Participation and Separation*

What I am trying to argue is that while the theories addressed above are particularly helpful for think through normative and ideal types of association and governance they do this at the expense of thinking the concept of action as such. At a more general level, as both of these approaches understand deliberation and protest as the only movement or action within their schema, they simultaneously privilege participation

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<sup>156</sup> Mitchell, *The Right to the City*; Simon Springer, "Public Space as Emancipation: Meditations on Anarchism, Radical Democracy, Neoliberalism and Violence," *Antipode* 43, no. 2 (March 1, 2011): 525–562.

within these movements as political action. This privilege granted to participation is of particular importance for this thesis as the concept of participation generally maintains the assumptions of separation that played such a central role in my first chapter. These assumptions are: 1) There is a separation between political and apolitical spheres, 2) Citizenship is an addition to the body that bridges this separation, 3) The citizen is the primary political actor.

Thus, Participation begins with the idea that there is an exclusive community in which members (or citizens) participate and govern their own territory (i.e. the nation-state). From this starting point, “the political” is defined as the inside of this community, and their decision making process, while the outside is defined as apolitical. In other words there is some sort of a separation between that which is political and that which isn’t. For example, in the United States, citizens participate politically through voting, running for office, volunteering for campaigns, or even doing activist work. Given the limited avenues of participation, it is easy to see how political processes are conceptualized as a separate sphere that may be reached through different modes of participation. Framed in this way, the political question for noncitizens often becomes how one influences or integrates into a separate predefined political sphere.<sup>157</sup>

But what would happen if instead of subsuming action within the question of citizenship we disentangle it and in fact invert their relationship, placing citizenship within the question of action rather than vice versa? Such a move does not so much require a critique of democratic or citizenship theory as it posits a limit to these political concepts. Therefore, I do not disagree that participation and democracy are important in

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<sup>157</sup> Irene Bloemraad, *Becoming a Citizen: Incorporating Immigrants and Refugees in the United States and Canada*, 1st ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

practice and indeed necessary. What I am questioning is the extent to which this realm can be privileged in defining innumerable forms of political action and the condition of politics within which these narrow activities occur.<sup>158</sup> To begin exploring the potential of such a project, I will work through the very popular notion of the right to the city and specifically literature that has sought to use it as a way of thinking through issues of legal status, non-citizenship, and immigration. In doing this I hope to demonstrate how action has been conceived largely as citizenship or democracy and how an alternative conception of action redefines the right to the city and resituates our consideration of politics.

## II: The Recurring Right to the City

The Right to the City is a concept made popular by Henri Lefebvre.<sup>159</sup> Usually, this concept is taken to declare something of an ideal form of governance in which the inhabitants of a city are able to govern it according to their needs and for their use. It is a statement that contrasts and opposes the capitalist idea of the city that prioritizes consumption and exchange value, claiming instead that resident's use value should be prioritized in the production and governance of cities. Inhabitation rather than status is what provides the basis of a claim on the governing processes of the city, which "is like a

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<sup>158</sup> This observation and similar ones about the limits of citizenship have been made in a variety of settings, though it is a point often made in passing in order to make a larger argument. In part I am hoping that this thesis can contribute to these observations by providing a more sustained engagement with this issue, and specifically exploring its methodological implications, which I am not aware of having been done before; Nicholas De Genova, "The Queer Politics of Migration: Reflections on 'Illegality' and Incurability," *Studies in Social Justice* 4, no. 2 (December 15, 2010): 101–126; Barry Hindess, "Citizenship for All," *Citizenship Studies* 8, no. 3 (2004): 305–315; Eleonore Kofman, "Citizenship for Some but Not for Others: Spaces of Citizenship in Contemporary Europe," *Political Geography* 14, no. 2 (February 1995): 121–137; Walters, "Mapping the Territory of (Non-)Citizenship."

<sup>159</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 1st ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 1996).

cry and a demand.”<sup>160</sup> This makes the right to the city an interesting and provocative concept for immigration literature as it declares that inhabitants rather than citizens should govern their own cities.

Despite this radical potential of declaring the right of all to participate, I suspect that this normative statement has been stretched beyond its purview and uncritically used as an analytical tool in researching struggles within cities. In the process, it reduces action to such actions as protest and deliberation and often takes the form of reifying “the right to the city” as a predefined form of governance.<sup>161</sup> Once made into an object that can be held, the obvious question for any particular project to ask is: who has the right to the city? Which further demonstrates that the analytic process has made it into a thing that can be held or not. This is how Monica Varsanyi seems to engage the right to the city by questioning the attention that this literature gives to immigration and legal status.

Varsanyi argues that noncitizens do not have the right to the city as they are excluded from access to public space by virtue of their immigration status. However, by reifying the right to the city and asking if undocumented immigrants have it, Varsanyi seems to largely maintain the assumptions of separation that this thesis contends. Thus right to the city becomes a separate governing process in which public space serves as the normative realm where democracy occurs. Such space is reminiscent of the deliberative ideals of Habermas, the diversity of Iris Marion Young, and the protests of Don Mitchell, and is not realized, or held, because it excludes inhabitants who do not have legal

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 158. Mark Purcell, “Excavating Lefebvre: The Right to the City and Its Urban Politics of the Inhabitant,” *GeoJournal* 58, no. 2/3 (2002): 99–108.

<sup>161</sup> Essentially making it a synonym for radical or direct democracy.

status.<sup>162</sup> Though counterintuitive, it seems that this normative conception of public space that undocumented migrants do not have access to, is different from the everyday lives of cities inhabitants and the more mundane actions of walking down the street.<sup>163</sup> Thus even with the openness of the concept of the right to the city, we see that when reified and conceived as separate process it is still citizens who are the primary actors in a political sphere. And more than that, action itself becomes reduced to citizenship. The right to the city is reduced to participation in governing processes that simultaneously privileges citizens as political actors.<sup>164</sup>

In some ways this reifying mode of thought on the right to the city is a return to the dialectical conception of struggle that I criticized in Poulantzas. In this mode of thought, struggle tends to be thought of as occurring between two groups of people, forces, or elements. In this way the right to the city is almost the synthetic moment in the dialectical process, but not quite, rather it is that which is struggled over. Struggling over the right to the city are democratic and un-democratic forces, or, the inhabitants versus the state and capital. This is how action is thought of in this conceptualization of struggle and it is evidenced in the explanation of Lefebvre that Varsanyi borrows from Don Mitchell.<sup>165</sup> In this explanation, the dialectical terms at work in the right to the city are

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<sup>162</sup> Habermas, Jürgen, “Three Normative Models of Democracy”; Mitchell, *The Right to the City*. Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*.

<sup>163</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 91–111.

<sup>164</sup> This equation of the right to the city with a new radical citizenship seems to be a popular intellectual move; Liette Gilbert and Mustafa Dikeç, “Right to the City: Politics of Citizenship,” in *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, ed. Kanishka Goonewardena et al., 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 250–263; Mark Purcell, “Citizenship and the Right to the Global City: Reimagining the Capitalist World Order,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 3 (September 1, 2003): 564–590.

<sup>165</sup> Mitchell, *The Right to the City*.

reduced back down to two from Lefebvre's three.<sup>166</sup> Thus struggle is thought of as the dialectical contradiction between representations of space (abstract, city planners) versus representational space (lived space, use value). Or, it is struggle of conceived versus lived space for the reified object of right to the city.

But what is glaringly absent from the discussion of Lefebvre's thought that may pivot and radically change our notion of action within the right to the city is the idea of spatial practice or perceived space. By taking this third element out, struggle, and action more broadly, is framed as a direct conflict between two opposing forces, usually reducing any sort of struggle over public space to protest. What is also left out when spatial practice is removed from struggle is the importance of the body's everyday movement in space and their perception, use and appropriation of space.<sup>167</sup> It is this everyday movement that contributes to the potential for the city to be different and conditions the life, governance, and protest of a city. This third element, omitted by Varsanyi and Mitchell, is what opens the idea of the political out of Poulantzas' conception of dialectical struggle to include what actively creates its own form of political becoming rather than reactively struggling for what is predefined. This form of action is lost in reified forms of the right to the city and simultaneously an issue at stake in our conceptualization of struggle.

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<sup>166</sup> Remember that in my reading of Lefebvre, the recognition of the third term in the dialectic is a key moment of his thought that enables us to think of struggle beyond opposition and the ROP and asserting the importance of the role of the body within the production of space.

<sup>167</sup> The discussion of the body is an often under-emphasized aspect of *The Production of Space*; Mitchell's contention with Lefebvre on this point is made clear on pg. 157 of *The Right to the City* in which he states people do not passively produce space (by existing as Lefebvre suggests) but must actively and strategically appropriate space. A similar contention is made by Harvey in *The Condition of Postmodernity* when he states that Lefebvre's dialectical thinking is "much too vague." David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), 218–222.



This re-reading of Lefebvre benefits from the lens of Henri Bergson who emphasizes the importance of both perception and the body.<sup>168</sup> Remember that for Bergson the body introduces indeterminacy into otherwise determinate relations because the perception of a body only recognizes that which is useful to it in matter, which is then expanded by memory. This reductive perception enables the body to react to stimuli and on matter (the city) in ways fundamentally indeterminable and otherwise not possible. This is life's creative use and indeterminate response to the immanent freedom within matter and the city itself, meaning that if the city is conditioned by its potential to be different, the body utilizes that potential and excess in order to act relatively free and create the city differently.<sup>169</sup> This is why an unexpected mass of bodies in a public space is so disconcerting to governments and planners that try to control the city. Who knows what will happen when bodies move and amass in and through space? To approach the right to the city in this way enables a different conceptualization of this idea itself and action more broadly. One that does not prioritize its normative ideal of how cities *should* work, but makes the statement that the political depends on, is conditioned by, and created through the everyday lives and movements of bodies. Following this line of thought, an individual body's presence conditions the creation of different futures, of changing the status quo. In this way, the right to the city is more-than-normative and declares that the city can never be completely dominated or made determinate. It is the always present (virtual) potential for the city to be different that is actualized through bodily movement and action in space.<sup>170</sup> Erasing rather than overcoming the separation

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<sup>168</sup> Bergson, *Matter and Memory*.

<sup>169</sup> Though I use the human body as my example because of its relation to Lefebvre and the right to the city, Bergson in no way limits us to the human, which is in fact not unique but a more complex form of life.

<sup>170</sup> Grosz, "Bodies-Cities," -.

between the political/apolitical, this perspective redefines the political as fundamental indeterminacy and the potential to be different rather than a separate realm of citizens.

Perhaps then through the right to the city we can now address action itself in our research. We can approach police attempts at controlling day-laborers in Home Depot parking lots as attesting to the fact that their presence creates that space in a different way and makes what can occur in that space fundamentally unknown, indeterminable, and political.<sup>171</sup> This is different than simply stating that the police forcing them to move means they don't have the right to the city.<sup>172</sup> If their presence did not fundamentally partake in the production of that space there would be no need for city ordinances or police to control them. What is also interesting about such cases is that the tactics cities employ against day laborers and migrant workers usually fail to a certain degree. They may have moved the pick up site for day laborers, but the practices and presence of undocumented workers continued in different spaces. Or just as importantly, workers (regardless of status) may successfully resist and win the right to stand on corner in order to get work.<sup>173</sup> The right to the city is partially this inability of space or cities to be completely controlled or determined. It is this irreducible fact of the existence of cities, of bodily presence in cities, which creates the potential for cities to be different and the possibility of working toward justice. In this way, it seems that undocumented workers

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<sup>171</sup> Monica W. Varsanyi, "Immigration Policing Through the Backdoor: City Ordinances, the 'Right to the City,' and the Exclusion of Undocumented Day Laborers," *Urban Geography* 29, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 29–52.

<sup>172</sup> Not to diminish or understate the importance of researching and understanding forms of bodily control.  
<sup>173</sup> This was a case that came up in my fieldwork in which a worker's center was able to successfully fight attempts in Lakewood New Jersey to kick daylaborers off their pick up site on a street corner. Though it is important to note that this took place through the consistent organizing work and not simply people standing on the corner. This is why I say protest and deliberation are still necessary and important things in their own right. What I am trying to point out is that action is beyond and in some ways conditions those particular and necessary struggles.

are already political by virtue of their presence rather than separated from a political sphere by their undocumented status.

This is of course not to say that undocumented workers do not suffer oppression in various shapes and forms and that this oppression should not be challenged and resisted.<sup>174</sup> Rather, I am asking *how* such oppression occurs and whether or not people must assimilate into a predefined idea of citizenship instead of creating their own forms of being political.<sup>175</sup> A struggle for the rights and protections of citizenship may well be a part of that active creation, however this is not to say that people are fulfilling academic's conceptions of citizenship. This could occur, but it could also be a complete redefinition of citizenship and the movement beyond citizenship in the creation of new forms of acting politically. Yet, if we subsume this action as moving towards or performing citizenship we risk missing these important and creative differences. This point is reinforced through my fieldwork with immigrant workers centers.

In both my focus group with members at and some interviews with staff members at these workers centers, there was a recurring idea that the members had political voices and opinions but that they simply weren't heard.<sup>176</sup> What my fieldwork demonstrates is that political action that is not citizenship is not recognizable as such. Thus in my focus group there were multiple comments that members voices were not heard or that people did not pay attention to what they had to say. This was reinforced during an interview

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<sup>174</sup> Immigrants' Rights/International Human Rights Clinic, *All Work and No Pay: Day Laborers, Wage Theft and Workplace Justice in New Jersey* (Seton Hall University, 2011).

<sup>175</sup> Annette D. Bernhardt, *Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers: Violations of Employment and Labor Laws in America's Cities* (Center for Urban Economic Development, 2009).

<sup>176</sup> I must qualify this however by saying that within my fieldwork the status of the members themselves was never talked about, in fact the centers I talked to do not inquire about the status of those who come to them for obvious reasons. However, I still believe these examples are very relevant as the argument that I am making does not depend on an essential idea of a "noncitizen," further status is clearly evident in my interviews and is a recurring point of contact that usually present even if only latently.

with a staff member where I was told a story about a woman at an immigration rally. At this rally there was a speaker at the front of the auditorium saying “we are trying to give voice to those that don’t have them,” to which the woman responded “I have a voice already!” What was further revealing during my focus group discussion was that when we talked about politics explicitly, it tended to focus on acts that are usually conceived as “citizen”, which included meeting with the governor and taking part in get out the vote campaigns.<sup>177</sup> This was then political realm that could only be reached through particular predefined measures.

However, in employment rather than “political” relations there were many examples of instances in which members were able to affect their conditions through workers centers and a different kinds of action. This counters what one interviewee called “the belief that an undocumented worker is so vulnerable that they cannot actually affect their working conditions.” An example given of this type of action was worker safety liaisons that were located on job sites. These liaisons are able to conduct health and safety audits, have direct contact with OSHA, and even shut down job sites. “And these are non-union sites!”<sup>178</sup> Other examples of affecting the work conditions were members being able to refuse to ride in overcrowded vans provided by temp agencies and demanding more vans so they could carry the legal capacity of passengers. In these ways the strategies and tactics of these worker centers and their members seek to create the terms and ways of engaging employers rather than conforming to predefined modes of action. This is not to argue that deliberation and protest are not necessary strategies, as these

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<sup>177</sup> There have been similar findings in Los Angeles; Milkman, *L.A. Story*; Pincetl, “Challenges to Citizenship: Latino Immigrants and Political Organizing in the Los Angeles Area”; Varsanyi, “The Paradox of Contemporary Immigrant Political Mobilization.”

<sup>178</sup> Interview

centers and members employ both in order to improve their working conditions. Rather, I think the theoretical question to be asking is whether this is the performance of citizenship or the creation of something quite different.

This is an important question to ask because the “ideals” of citizenship that are so important to many academic discussions were largely absent from my fieldwork with workers centers. Thus legal status often came up as an important issue in such cases as the precarity of not having a social security card, the fear of deportation when travelling, or as a tool that employers use to intimidate workers. However, what is at stake in these issues seem to be more concerns about the ability of workers to live, carry on, grow, and continue in everyday life rather than a desire to attain the status of (or perform) “the citizen.” Indeed these workers organizations left that decision of pursuing citizenship up to the worker themselves rather than pushing it on them.

However, it is necessary to note that the methods of these two organizations are very democratic in nature. Thus workers actually run the organization and make decisions through committees and by consensus and these appear to be necessary strategies for achieving the demands that these workers are making for respect, better pay, and a more just society. The question for this thesis is to what extent these strategies can be extended into the conceptualization of politics and further what amount of autonomy such an extension into speculation allows political subjects their own becoming.

Therefore, I would argue that the extent to which workers center are producing “citizens” as defined by political theory is rather indeterminate. More importantly, I think that we may benefit by keeping this judgment open when asking a research question, so

as to not close the autonomy of political action and the ways that subjects may determine the terms of their own political identity and action. To do so is to recognize our limits as academics in analyzing concrete political struggles that are *always* more than we can represent. Pursuing this goal I will now explore the potential of the question of action as a methodological starting point rather than the question of citizenship.

### III: The Independent Question of Action

#### *On false problems, or, why questions matter*

To make a compelling case for an independent question of action as a more productive question than citizenship we must first explore why the stating of a question is so important in the first place and what is at stake when they are posed. The formulation of a research question is primarily a methodological concern to the degree that methodology, epistemology, and ontology can be separated. This is at least how the social sciences train their researchers which is evidenced by research proposals that emphasize research questions and methods rather than epistemology and ontology.

But why does such a seemingly simple thing as asking a question carry so much weight? This could be answered in a variety of ways depending on one's epistemological orientation. For some the statement of a question could be a process of discovery. One goes out into the world, discovers a problem that exists within the world and then poses a question that in some way investigates the discovered, pre-existent, problem. According to this orientation, the statement of a problem could be important in terms of how well it addresses or uncovers the preexisting problem of concern. It is an issue of how close to the truth of a problem one can get to through the posing of a question that then sets up the

methods carried out.<sup>179</sup> Yet other epistemological perspectives would not understand the process of asking a question in such a way. Such an example is Deleuze's reading of Bergson's method of intuition.<sup>180</sup> In this reading we take as a starting point that the problems research questions address are not simply discovered but rather created.<sup>181</sup> For Deleuze this is important because it means that we are not simply limited to testing the validity of solutions to problems. Rather, we can test the validity of a problem itself, which is necessary because the solutions to problems are actually contained within their statement, even if they have not been uncovered yet. An example of this is the problem of political action when it is defined as the absence of citizenship. The obvious solution contained within the problem of not having citizenship is simply the granting of citizenship to those that do not have it. In this regard, the statement of a question is not important because it uncovers or addresses a preexisting problem but rather it is important because it created the problem itself. What is at stake in the statement of a question is therefore the creation of both a problem and a solution.

Like I said earlier, the difference between the two perspectives that I just elaborated is one of epistemology. Fundamentally, it is a different conceptualization of the limits of our intellect and our role as researchers in the process of research. Rather than attempt a critique of the first view I will simply refer the interested reader to large and seminal debates within geography on positivism.<sup>182</sup> Instead of undertaking such a

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<sup>179</sup> Of course this is not simply a teleological movement of questions to methods. Just as often, we pose a question in view of the limits of the methods we have at our disposal.

<sup>180</sup> Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 13–36.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>182</sup> Trevor Barnes, "Lives Lived and Lives Told: Biographies of Geography's Quantitative Revolution," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19 (2001): 409–429; David Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993), 304–346; L. McDowell, "Space, Place and Gender Relations: Part II. Identity,

critique myself, I will simply try to develop the second approach that considers the stating of problems as an act of creation in order to think through the questions of citizenship and action.

Bergson provides an excellent starting point for this project in that he reflects upon the limits and orientation of our intellect. In doing this he lays out two principles that guide the reader through *Matter and Memory*. The first is that “in psychological analysis we must never forget the utilitarian character of our mental functions.”<sup>183</sup> As the second chapter elaborated, this is important because our processes of perception and action within the world conditions our intellect, meaning that our intellectual capacities are not oriented towards speculation but rather action. Our perception of matter is already a reduction of its qualities and relations that is necessary for our use and action. Bergson is not saying that this orientation is bad but rather becomes problematic for our speculative concerns given the second principle that “habits formed in action find their way up to the sphere of speculation.”<sup>184</sup> This is problematic because when the process of action is used as a tool of speculation false problems are formulated and an “artificial obscurity” is created.<sup>185</sup> Thus when the intellect is taken to function as a tool of speculation we have a conflation of two processes that are actually different in kind. The “false” problems created from this conflation are thus false in that they result from the overextension of action into speculation.

In order to identify when a problem is false, Deleuze provides some general rules of Bergson’s method of intuition, a method that recognizes the utilitarian orientation of

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Difference, Feminist Geometries and Geographies,” *Progress in Human Geography* 17, no. 3 (September 1, 1993): 305–318.

<sup>183</sup> Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 16.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*



the intellect and seeks to move beyond this bent. These rules allow us to identify different types of false problems, two of which he identifies as “nonexistent problems” and “badly stated questions.”<sup>186</sup> The first type of false problem is immediately attractive for this inquiry into citizenship as it claims that “nonexistent problems” occur when there is confusion between “more” and “less.” As I have posited, the question of citizenship sets up the citizen as more than the noncitizen which makes it ripe for this Bergsonian critique. This confusion of “more” and “less” is discussed in *Creative Evolution* in which Bergson states:

However strange our assertion may seem, there is more, and not less, in the idea of an object conceived as "not existing" than in the idea of this same object conceived as "existing"; for the idea of the object "not existing" is necessarily the idea of the object "existing" with, in addition, the representation of an exclusion of this object by the actual reality taken in block.<sup>187</sup>

He then goes on to state that the problem of “nothing,” as Deleuze affirms, results from extending action beyond its proper sphere.<sup>188</sup> Thus when we act we proceed from nothing to something, however this movement to something is not the creation of a thing per se but rather the creation of a utility. Our action has a utilitarian logic that understands our use of matter as the creation of something. The overextension of action occurs when we posit this same movement from nothing to something in our speculation. To overextend in this way implants in us the idea that reality fills a void. That something existing is more than its nonexistence. This confusion of more and less is particularly salient in the seminal work of Hannah Arendt, which greatly influences and underpins much citizenship literature today.

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<sup>186</sup> Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 16.

<sup>187</sup> Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 311.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

For Arendt, an investigation into politics necessitates an inquiry into the human condition in which she ends up situating politics as a uniquely human activity.<sup>189</sup> Thus the human condition is hierarchically categorized as Labor, Work, and Action, the combination of all termed as “Vita Activa.”<sup>190</sup> Labor refers to the realm of necessity or the biological processes of the human body that ephemerally and cyclically consumes rather than creates that which outlasts the individual life of its creator.<sup>191</sup> Work is that activity that corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, or the creation of the human artifice. This activity creates an artificial world of things that is distinctly different from its natural surroundings and transcends individual lives, it is not embedded nor does it compensate in the species life-cycle. Action, the last of the three, corresponds to the condition of plurality, “to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world.”<sup>192</sup> This third aspect of plurality is specifically *the* condition of political life as politics would not exist if an individual were to live in complete isolation nor if an association of people were totally the same. Thus this idea of action necessitates that no two people are the same and it is precisely difference that enables the direct interaction between men.

Though I am not sure that she would say this in the same way, I think that in this schema of *vita activa*, Arendt is setting up differences in kind, rather than differences of degree, between labor, work, and action. Thus the realm of work is distinct, un-embedded, and un-compensate with the biological life that is the realm of labor. Further

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<sup>189</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1st ed. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1998).

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>191</sup> Arendt uses the term “immortal” to designate that which is created by but outlasts the individual biological lives of its creator. This is counter posed to the “eternal” which exists completely outside of the space and time of mortality.

<sup>192</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 7.

this stark distinction between the biological realm of necessity and the human realm of freedom continues to play out in the private/public distinction of which the entire second chapter is devoted. This creation of a difference in kind between the biological (labor) and the artificial (work) does not place the two in a heterarchical association in which the relation of “more” and “less” or “better” and “worse” would seemingly be irrelevant. Rather, they are set up hierarchically in which action is claimed to be “more” than labor, an addition to the natural world. This logic is at work in Arendt’s discussion on the idea of permanence. In this discussion labor is defined as that which leaves behind nothing of permanence and merely consumes.<sup>193</sup> But in contrast to this, work leaves behind the more permanent and durable human artifice that is necessary for the “world,” which refers to the public or the thing between people that binds them together.<sup>194</sup> The creating of this public through work therefore enables a world different in kind from the biological necessity of life, a world that is necessary for action or the coming together and binding of different men. Thus the realms of work and action are “more” than labor in that they create an artifice that labor cannot produce and that conditions politics.

Yet in this creation of a hierarchical difference of kind between labor, work, and action we have to wonder if Arendt does not confuse “more” for “less” in the way that Bergson describes. Is our ability to use matter in the creation of the human artifice really the creation of something from nothing or could it not be the exact processes of evolution at work?<sup>195</sup> Indeed, Bergson would argue that the idea of the artifice as something from nothing results from the overextension of action into the realm of speculation. Thus with this confusion, a difference of kind is postulated between biology and the human when in

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>195</sup> Grosz, *The Nick of Time*.

fact there is a difference of degree. Further, Bergson's argument suggests an inversion of the relation of degree when more and less is confused, meaning that action would actually be less and not more than labor because labor is the excess of action. This seems to be Arendt's confusion according to a Bergsonian logic, action (citizenship) is not more but less than labor.

But can we take the analysis a step further? Deleuze says that the first type of false problem that confuses "more" for "less" rests upon a second type of false problem that arbitrarily groups together differences of kind.<sup>196</sup> This second type of false problem is called a "badly stated" question and is evident within Arendt and the literature on citizenship that has followed.<sup>197</sup> Thus, in order for Arendt to be able to posit the public and action as *the* realm of the political, which prioritizes speech and vision, she must also claim that anything considered political must be mediated through these avenues. This means that there is no room for a difference of kind *within* this conception of the political and action, all politics must occur in public and according to her definition of action. This is broadly the argument that I have been making throughout this thesis, that when citizenship is taken to be the only form of political action, different kinds of political action must be homogenized as citizenship, as the same. Or at least, if these different forms of action are not able to mediate through citizenship, then they are simply not considered political. This exact point seems to be a danger of the literature that examines citizenship within the everyday.<sup>198</sup> By simply taking a concept such as citizenship, which I have argued with Bergson is a reductive concept, and diffusing it within everyday

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<sup>196</sup> Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 20.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 17; Isin and Nielsen, *Acts of Citizenship*.

<sup>198</sup> Jen Dickinson et al., "Introduction: Geographies of Everyday Citizenship," *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 7, no. 2 (2008): 100–110; Isin and Nielsen, *Acts of Citizenship*.

actions, you run the risk of arbitrarily grouping differences of kind which results in false problems and a violence to fundamentally different political actions.

To sum up, I have argued that the question of citizenship falls into the trap of a “false problem” as defined by Deleuze in *Bergsonism*. It does this by confusing citizenship as more than non-citizenship and arbitrarily grouping forms of political action that differ in kind, under the banner of the citizen. Thus it seems that moving beyond the question of citizenship, a Bergsonian critique of Arendt on a methodological level provides some interesting new ways to approach the issue of the citizen/noncitizen binary that neither posits the citizen as the only political actor nor overcomes that binary through their oppositional relation of inclusion/exclusion.<sup>199</sup> Bergson challenges us to flip rather than oppose the “more” and “less” relation in the citizen/noncitizen binary. In this way citizenship would have to be understood as only one way of acting politically in an innumerable amount of different forms of political action. Methodologically, this would be the new starting assumption upon which to formulate research questions that would avoid the “false” problems of the citizenship question. My proposed alternative starting point is the conception of struggle elaborated in chapter 2 and the question of action that may be posed by considering bodily movement in the production of space.

### ***Posing a question of action***

Given that questions matter because of the problems and solutions that they create, I have argued that the question of citizenship is unproductive in that it sets up a “false” problems by thinking of citizenship and participation as that which uniquely

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<sup>199</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*; Susan Bibler Coutin, *Nations of Emigrants: Shifting Boundaries of Citizenship in El Salvador and the United States* (Cornell University Press, 2007); Mountz, *Seeking Asylum*.

makes humans political. This is what happens when one assumes the *human* condition as the object of inquiry as Arendt does. By limiting oneself to the human then action not only becomes the condition of the political, a plurality of men in public, but it becomes the condition of the inquiry itself. This is the overextension of action into the realm of speculation. But I also want to pose a question of action, though in a very different way; one that does not confuse action with a given speculative process, but investigates and considers it beyond the human, or, something like the conception of struggle I began to develop in my second chapter. In this way I hope to consider action itself, not as that which is uniquely human or that which can be reduced to participation, citizenship, or democracy, but as that which is part of the broader processes, movements, and struggles within which we exist.

This relates back to the assumptions of separation that I enumerated and dealt with in the first chapter. In returning to these assumptions now with the language of critique provided by Bergson, I can suggest that these are “false problems,” meaning that they cannot be *overcome* as citizenship theory has tried, but rather must be *erased* by restating the question or problem. Again, this is not to say that noncitizens are not marginalized or do not suffer oppression, but that it is falsely stated as a problem of inclusion/exclusion which is simultaneously a logic of more/less.

Thus there is of course truth to idea that noncitizens are excluded. This is evident in the fact that citizens are symbolically and discursively represented as political actors in a way that noncitizens are not, who are instead often demonized and racialized as “illegal.”<sup>200</sup> However, to state this problem as one of inclusion/exclusion is to create a

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<sup>200</sup> De Genova, *Working the Boundaries*; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

solution of simply spreading citizenship and inclusion. A solution that does not recognize the political action of noncitizens as such but rather reduces it (and all political action to being mediated symbolically as citizenship.<sup>201</sup> Different forms of action cannot actualize as such.

The question of action moves beyond these concerns by seeking to state a problem that allows the space for the autonomous definition of action rather than a subsumption under a phallogentric question of citizenship that reduces the different to the same.<sup>202</sup> There are therefore two goals in substituting a question of action for a question of citizenship and these are also the issues at stake when stating a question. The first is to avoid stating a “false” problem, which simultaneously posits a false solution and the second is the creation of space for difference to actualize rather than being subsumed under the logic of citizenship.

This is significant in that it places the “problem” of inclusion/exclusion at the foot of the citizen rather than the noncitizen. Thus even a citizen may perform political actions that are not citizenship yet are homogenized by its logic of the same. When thinking about the “noncitizen” this can hopefully avoid its romanticization as a site of “resistance,” demonization as “illegal,” and colonization as “absent” or “lacking.” The whole of politics must be re-conceptualized rather than simply the noncitizen, who is not the problem.

In closing, it seems that one potential for posing a question of action is to focus on the role of the body in the production of space. Thus starting from this position we can

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<sup>201</sup> This point parallels Luce Irigaray’s critique of phallogentrism which reduces two, or difference, into one. Sexual difference is however her point of concern and she argues that the feminine has only been able to be represented through the mediation of the masculine.

<sup>202</sup> I use phallogentric to denote a form of logic that reduces that which is different into the same. This is inspired by the work of Luce Irigaray, “Women’s Exile,” *Ideology and Consciousness* 1 (1977): 62–76.

pose a question more open than one of citizenship, something like: how does action occur? how does it become political? How does it become autonomous? This of course does not address exactly the same thing that a question of citizenship might, that is precisely the point. However, there is still room for research and questions of citizenship, as long as they do not attempt to extend beyond their limits and recognize their condition and situation in action, struggle, and nature.<sup>203</sup> Thus questions of action and citizenship should both be posed as fundamentally different questions and situated within broader movements of struggle. Personally, I am interested in the question of action as it appears to have been forgotten under the research agenda of citizenship. Making it a potentially more creative site for research in a way that citizenship cannot.

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<sup>203</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power*, annotated ed. (Duke University Press Books, 2005).



## Conclusion

This thesis engaged the conception of politics within citizenship literature in order to evaluate the question of citizenship and pose an alternative question of action. In particular it has been concerned with the idea that citizenship is the right to have rights, or the defining term of the political. This idea is often expressed within the problem of inclusion/exclusion, where the formation of a political community necessitates an exclusion of those outside that community. It is a problem that has rightfully been of central concern for citizenship theory. If citizenship is the only (or at least privileged) way of being political, the idea that some must necessarily be excluded and can never be “fully” political is a deeply troubling postulate. The knee jerk reaction is that everyone *should* be a citizen and that inclusion in this community of citizens is the only way of achieving democratic rights and participation. Citizenship literature makes this claim in at least two ways. The first is to say: “we need to extend citizenship beyond the exclusive borders of the nation-states, guaranteeing to all *humans* basic citizenship rights.”<sup>204</sup> The argument is that perhaps exclusion isn’t necessary, maybe it results from the way rights have been conceived, and if we could only conceive them in a more nuanced way then we may perhaps formulate some core rights that can be granted to everyone.<sup>205</sup> We *can* include all if rights are founded in the idea of the human or person in one way or another.

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<sup>204</sup> Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien*. I am claiming that Bosniak merely represents such an argument. This is not a direct quote.

<sup>205</sup> Cohen, *Semi-Citizenship in Democratic Politics*.

The second approach has been to challenge “the logic of exclusion” itself.<sup>206</sup> Which is to say that those excluded from citizenship are not actually excluded from being political. Noncitizens are included *by* their exclusion from citizenship. This doesn’t mean exclusion is a desirable form of inclusion.<sup>207</sup> Rather, the importance is that the political assemblage of citizenship includes the noncitizen, providing the means of challenging one’s exclusion by asserting a different conception of justice, community, etc..... This is how the ostensibly excluded become political, and it is these two trajectories that appear to be the primary avenues that citizenship literature has explored in seeking to overcome the problem of inclusion/exclusion.<sup>208</sup> Or to put it more bluntly: this is how the “problem” of the noncitizen has been addressed by citizenship theory.

Therefore, this thesis has demonstrated that citizenship is the defining term of “the political” and “action” in both of these avenues, by either orienting the noncitizen towards the normative trajectory of becoming citizen, or defining the potential for becoming political as challenging one’s exclusion from citizenship. In both cases, citizenship preempts a consideration of the more-than-citizen and action on their own terms. Intervening, I claimed that the dominance of “citizenship” is methodologically produced in a question that makes three key assumptions: 1) There is a separation between political and apolitical spheres 2) Citizenship is an addition to the body that bridges this separation, and 3) The citizen is the primary political actor. These assumptions therefore conceptualize the political as a transcendental realm accessible only through the mediation of citizenship and evacuate immanent and spatial qualities of living and existing of political importance. This question therefore overextends the

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<sup>206</sup> Isin, *Being Political*.

<sup>207</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

<sup>208</sup> Isin, “Engaging, Being, Political.”

concept of citizenship, and a reconceptualization of politics that is not grounded in a singular term necessitates an alternative question.

However, reformulating our problems and questions requires examining our conceptions of politics' condition. This was the labor of my second chapter that examined the concept of struggle, arguing that a dialectical conception is conducive to the assumptions of separation and a citizen oriented politics. I posed an alternative conception of struggle-as-growth which is a continually differentiating movement within which we may situate citizenship as an always partial and reductive term rather than one that orients and measures all others. Citizenship is one term among many that are politically important within the broader movement of struggle.

Yet if such assumptions allow us to pose a better research question, what questions can we now ask? I argue that it becomes possible to pose a question of action. One based on its own terms rather than subsumed within a question of citizenship. Thus, a question of citizenship reduces action to some form of democratic deliberation or protest that often takes place within a relatively static or reified public space or public sphere. This makes democracy the only moving political process, which others must take part in if they want to become political. Democracy becomes the only form of action. But if we begin with an assumption of struggle-as-growth rather than separation, the action of citizens is no longer the only moving part, or the bridge between political and apolitical spheres. Struggle-as-growth allows us to consider movement as a whole, and how particular actions within that movement become autonomous and political. This is the object of inquiry a question of action creates that contrasts the separated realm created by a question of citizenship.

## I: Research Trajectories

By concluding with a research question, this thesis intends to be a beginning statement or introduction to more research. From the variety of different trajectories that a question of action might take there are three in particular that I will address. The first is a closer engagement with the texts and theories that have dealt with in this thesis. In particular, the thought of Bergson is essential for thinking action and movement and I have only scratched the surface of this potential. The idea of autonomous action within his thought is one that I would like to engage in greater depth as he seems to provide a way of thinking autonomy that I have not yet encountered. Thus to think autonomy within Bergson is at some level to deal with the question of how free movement occurs *within* movement. Thus if the universe itself is becoming, how does action occur within that which is already moving? He talks about this in terms of the rhythm of movement and how our body through its complex nervous system, disrupts or reorients the movement that it receives in order to create it's own. This differs from the idea of autonomy as democratic self-governance or even an idea of constant self re-subjectification. How this may help conceive political autonomy may be a beneficial path to explore.

A second trajectory could be an ethnographically based study of cities that considers the relationship between the body, the production of space, and how this production become political. In particular, it would be interesting to consider migrant communities in cities, as issues of citizenship and movement are fundamental aspects of

these cases. This would be nothing less than the challenge of empirically documenting how movement and process produce cities, people, and politics.

Lastly, it seems a historical consideration of the morphology of cities, people, and the earth may provide insight on the question of action and how the idea of action has changed over time. Such a project would compliment the previous two as it could productively combine empirical evidence on these different processes of change and also a genealogy of the idea of action itself. What movements have been recognized as action while others have not and under what conditions were they classified as political? In this way I think that a historical study could compliment and enrich both theoretical and ethnographic work on the question of action.

In conclusion, at stake in the question of citizenship is our conceptualization of politics. It is the difference between thinking the political as a separated, transcendental realm founded in the term of citizenship, or as that which is before and beyond the citizen, in the immanent and spatial qualities of life, and in the production of these terms themselves.

I have argued that the question of action has much more potential for future research in politics, urban studies, and theory more generally by considering what it really means to think a world in process, in which there is only movement and not stasis. How could this inform our understanding of political concepts? How could this affect our analysis of concrete political struggles? How could this change the kinds of questions that we ask? These are the trajectories that my thesis has attempted to develop by posing the question of action as an alternative to the question of citizenship.

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