

Migration, Citizenship, Regionalization: An Introduction

Katja Sarkowsky, Sabine Schwarze, Rainer-Olaf Schultze

In her 2005 novel *What We All Long For*, Trinidadian-Canadian writer Dionne Brand begins the narrative not with her human, but her spatial protagonist – Toronto. “There are Italian neighbourhoods and Vietnamese neighbourhoods in this city; there are Chinese ones and Ukrainian ones and Pakistani ones and Korean ones and African ones. Name a region on the planet and there’s someone from there, here.” (4). Toronto is a place of multiple origins, languages, cultures; the ways in which identities and agency are negotiated in multi-layered constellations of inclusion and exclusion link the metropolitan urban space to ‘Canada’, but even more so to places beyond national borders. Toronto could be replaced here with Montréal, English with French. Both cities – in their relationship to the nation, to the transnation, to the regions in which they are located – then can easily be read as embodying (if in different ways) the complexities of contemporary immigration societies in the western hemisphere.

Transnationalization, simultaneous processes of regionalization, questions of inclusion and exclusion, as well as their impact on citizenship – these have become crucial issues when discussing questions of cultural diversity, individual and collective identity formation, as well as the accommodation of ‘difference’ in contemporary Western societies. In this context, Canada presents a prototype for such constellations and challenges; particularly in the past two decades, Canada has replaced the United States as a model for addressing such questions (conceptually and practically) in European contexts, even though the understanding of e.g. cultural diversity differs significantly across the Atlantic (Lammert and Sarkowsky 2010: 17-20).

Both Canada as a nation and Canadian literature and culture are shaped by dialectical dynamics of globalization and regionalization and by socio-cultural and ethnic heterogeneity. Since the 1970s, politics in Canada have sought to systematically address the issues arising from this pluralism in conceptual and pragmatic terms, encompassing both a politics of multiculturalism and concepts of multicultural citizenship (Kymlicka 1998); Canadian literature and culture, in turn, have reflected this diversity both in subject matter and composition of cultural production, accompanied in the 1990s by heated debates about identity and representation. These processes have potential implications beyond Canadian national borders: In politics and society, in literary and scholarly debates, Canadian constellations reflect conflicts over migration, cultural and linguistic pluralism, regionalization, and citizenship that have also decisively shaped the structures and dynamics in Europe, particularly since the end of the Cold War. So despite the indisputable differences, Canadian developments – both socio-cultural and conceptual – can be seen as paradigmatic and exemplary in many ways.

We thus take Canada as a starting point to critically investigate crucial societal constellations in their developments and ruptures on various levels – politically, institutionally, literarily, linguistically, or geographically – and to explore them with regard to their potential function as a model for other – e.g. European – contexts. Drawing on these controversial and vital debates, this volume is structured along the lines of three interrelated and prominent areas of inquiry: migration, citizenship and regionalization, all of which have strong bearings on both politics and culture.

Migration

For some time now, Canada has replaced the United States as a model for how do deal with immigration: European countries look towards specific immigration policies in Canada (such as the ‘point system’), as well as towards Canada’s integration measures, language and education policies, and models of multiculturalism. But not only in politics and the political sciences does Canada play a crucial role when it comes to migration. In literary studies, both Anglophone and Francophone, Canadian literatures of migration provide significant models; and Canada’s linguistic pluralism, official bilingualism, and the special status of Quebec and Quebecois language policies present important fields of research with equally far-reaching consequences for other contexts – national, regional, but also scholarly – as well.

The field of migration studies has fundamentally shifted in the past two decades: not so much focused anymore on the ‘classic’ fields of emigration and immigration and the analysis of push and pull factors, current research tends to understand migration as transmigration, that is, it concentrates less on the regions of departure and arrival and more strongly focuses on the multiple processes of migration and on various agents’ perspectives (Hannerz 1992; Pries 1998; Ruokonen-Engler in this volume). This form of migration significantly contributes to the production of transnational and transcultural spaces and identities that by far exceed the boundaries of the nation state; it thus foregrounds multiple and often highly conflictual positionalities and transnational connections rather than the categories of ‘country of origin’ or ‘host country’. In this context, categories and processes of social stratification such as ethnicity and gender and debates over questions of citizenship take center stage.

Against this background, the first section of this volume, “Migration, Transnationalism, and Labour”, concentrates on migration from and to Canada with a particular focus on labour and regulating policies of migration.

In the first contribution of this section, Yves Frenette (Université de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg) discusses three specific case histories of migration and transmigration (North America, South America, Europe) against the background of a broader history of migration to and from Canada and the establishment and enforcement of borders in North America. By way of a micro-historic reading of the migrations of an Acadian family over a period of 200 years from Nova Scotia to Saskatchewan via Quebec and the United States; Canadian emigration to Brazil in the last decade of the 19th century; and the migration of a Dane to Ontario in the second half of the 20th century, he suggests to read migrants as historical agents who do not easily fit into the analytical frameworks offered by the social sciences. While Frenette highlights individual life stories and that of families over decades if not centuries, the following two contributions by Augie Fleras (University of Waterloo) and Minna-Kristiina Ruokonen-Engler (Goethe University, Frankfurt) focus on the connection between migration and labour regimes. Looking at Canadian immigration policies, Fleras argues that recent developments increasingly run the risk of relying on “(im)migrants as commodified labour instead of Canada-building citizens”; in their focus on commodification and their reliance on racialization they also create the risk of making the same mistakes in the field of immigration committed previously by European countries. Ruokonen-Engler zooms in on the question of how nation states react to the growing demand of labour in specific fields such as domestic work. Comparing the current immigration policies of Canada and Germany, she offers to look at the regulation of labour migration as possibly both an “economic solution and as a socio-ethical dilemma” for nation states, and discusses these regulations as potentially reinforcing gendered inequalities, both nationally and transnationally. In the final article in this section, Andreas Fahrmeir (Goethe University, Frankfurt) connects a discussion of the North Atlantic migration system in the 19th century with reflections on how recent research on these migrations to North America and conceptualizations of ‘desirable’ and ‘expendable’ citizens might impact present day policies. Countering the romantic notion of largely ‘unregulated’ migration in the North Atlantic throughout the 19th century, Fahrmeir argues that the regulation of migration relied primarily on case-to-case decisions based on a liberal worldview “which placed great reliance on individuals’ capability for improvement and tolerated a variety of life choices.” Fleras’ and Fahrmeir’s contributions in particular point to a crucial connection between questions of migration, inclusion, and exclusion based on notions of ‘desirability’ of immigrants – economic desirability, but also their potential contribution to nation-building. Bonnie Honig has highlighted the importance of the ‘foreigner’ for national imaginaries (Honig 2001), as a founder, a rejuvenator, or a challenger. ‘Citizenship’ is one way of making the foreigner into ‘one of us’, and as the debates in the past fifteen years in particular have shown, notions of citizenship both as theoretical concepts and practical instruments are crucial and contested in times of transnationalization and regionalization.

Citizenship

Bound up with similar developments, like migration the understanding of citizenship has also significantly shifted since the 1990s. While earlier concepts had built upon T.H. Marshall’s notion of citizenship as encompassing legal, political, and civic rights (Marshall 1950/1992), more recent conceptualizations have included additional categories that transcend the nation state as the privileged locus of citizenship and include new formulations of rights and citizenship identity: questions of ecology (Stevenson 2003), gender (Lister 1997), sexuality (Isin and Wood 1999; Quaestio 2000), ethnic heritage and language (Kymlicka 1995, 2001) or culture (Stevenson 2003; Pakulski 2010; Boele van Hensbroek 2010) have led to modifications of citizenship. These recent developments of ‘citizenship’ have to be seen in the growing field of tension between national and transnational constellations, reflected here in the fact that the above named categories and the related rights cannot be regulated anymore on an exclusively national level. In both Canadian and European debates, questions of what constitutes citizenship in the first place, of how to contextualize the rights discussed as ‘citizenship rights’, and of how this can be reflected institutionally have thus become crucial (Kymlicka 1995, 2001; Benhabib 2004). In short, citizenship ceased to be an exclusively political and social question and increasingly included cultural aspects. As a consequence, citizenship as a category of belonging, identity, and analysis was also taken up in literary and cultural studies. While ‘citizenship’ always at least implicitly had a strongly cultural component, the debates initiated since the 1990s and intensified in the early 2000s have increasingly taken ‘citizenship’ as an analytical category used to capture complex processes of identity formations across individual societies and cultures; that is, to highlight these processes as transcultural and transnational without losing sight of the political frameworks of specific nation states, but also taking into account sub- or transnational constructs such as regions.

The second section of this volume, “Citizenship, Multiculturalism, and Representation” then sets out to investigate not only the shifting concepts and role of citizenship in political and cultural debates, but also to connect them to multiculturalism and the questions of representation, fields of inquiry that since the 1990s have linked ‘citizenship’ to identity politics on the one hand and, in the Canadian context, to controversial constitutional debates on the other. Marcus Llanque (Augsburg University) suggests two facets of citizenship – (political) membership and (cultural) belonging – and argues that dominant understandings of citizenship in the Canadian context such as Kymlicka’s and Isin’s place it in the framework of identity politics and thus highlight belonging at the cost of membership. Instead, Llanque stresses commitment politics as a counterweight to appropriately analyze the role of citizenship in modern society. Also regarding citizenship as more than a mere legal status, Emmanuelle Richez (Concordia University, Montréal) and Christopher Manfredi (McGill University, Montréal) discuss the role of the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and connected jurisprudence for the shifting understanding of Canadian

citizenship. Using four Supreme Court cases between 2002 and 2009 as case studies, they argue that “the *Charter* jurisprudence has promoted a liberal model of citizenship contrary to communitarian and republican ones.” Both Llanque’s and Richez and Manfredi’s contributions make their arguments against the background of Canadian multiculturalism as a social reality, as a discursive field, and as an official set of policies. Concentrating on the first and particularly the third aspect, Rainer-Olaf Schultze and Nina Gerstenkorn (Augsburg University) discuss the demographic development as well as changing policies towards minorities in Canada; highlighting the conflict lines of both multicultural societal set-ups and the debates of how to most constructively address them politically, the authors look at the opportunities and dangers also with a nod towards the European interest in Canadian policies as a potential model for European countries. In the final contribution of this section, Larissa Lai (University of British Columbia, Vancouver) shifts gear and looks at not only the question of cultural (self-)representation of marginalized groups but goes one step further to analyze the relationship between ethnic minorities (in this case indigenous peoples and Asian Canadians) and its cultural representation. Lai argues that this relationship that often assumes a form of ‘kinship’, while remaining shaped by power imbalances and misrecognition, nevertheless “offers longevity and good health rather than death and genocide”.

While the questions (and critique) of identity raised in this section refer most overtly to analytical and identity categories such as ‘ethnicity’, other categories clearly play a role as well for the questions at hand. The importance of Quebec in the debates referenced so far highlights not only their political and cultural aspects but also points to another development that has accompanied the process of transnationalization: regionalization.

Regionalization

In face of diminishing legitimacy of categories such as the nation in the context of globalization, transnationalization processes, and transmigration, the cultural and social sciences began to develop a more dynamic understanding/reconceptualization of the category ‘space’ as an analytical category. Referring to frameworks adopted from geography and urban planning as well as architecture, space was now understood not merely as a background or a setting for social and cultural practices, but as a crucial component of these processes. As such, space was both producing and produced (Löw 2000), a dynamic, changeable, and actively changing construction rather than a static container (Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1996; Schroer 2006).

This process-oriented understanding of space allowed for differentiated and transdisciplinary analyses of those dynamics that have changed global spatial constellations with long-term effects, especially with regard to the role of the nation-state. Transnationalization and regionalization are two complementary and often overlapping processes that pose a fundamental challenge to the nation-state. While the concept of the region – also in the context of Canadian studies – is not new, it changed in light of the described developments towards an understanding of regions as dynamic and relational constructions (Hiller 2002); the same can be observed in European contexts. These regions are, for one, defined geographically and economically; this aspect is usually foregrounded when globalization and regionalization are discussed, and it has significantly shaped the understanding of regionalization as a counter-development or even resistance to globalization. However, regionalization also has a strong cultural component. The emergence of regional structures and regional identities is manifest in processes of meaning-making and identifications (Hannerz 1992) that, in turn, can and do reflect back onto economic and geographical structures.

The third and final section of this volume, “Regionalism, Language, and Identity”, seeks to connect these processes specifically to language and its role in and for identity formation and affirmation. The four contributions of this section investigate the peculiarities that structure the regionalization process of French, which can be postulated to be a “sociolinguistic exception” (Pöll 2005), and its perception in the Canadian province of Quebec. The first contribution by Bernhard Pöll (Salzburg University) sheds light on the normative situation of French beyond France as its original territory and the formation as well as the acceptance of differing language norms as an essential for regional identity formation based on a notion of linguistic emancipation. Thus, increasing attention is paid to these variations also by lexicography and the new general dictionary of the French language produced within the *Franqus* project and marketed under the name *Usito*, presented in the contribution Héléne Cajolet-Laganière and Serge D’Amico (Laval University Quebec), who apply an open approach to the French language and its geographical variation. Even though in the French-speaking world there is a trend towards a reinforcement of the traditional centralized linguistic model, the emergence of national norms reflects a patent disequilibrium in terms of demographics and symbolic weight between France and the territories outside France where French - like in Quebec - is spoken as a mother tongue. A study about the link between the Quebecois dubbing language and the attitudes of the Quebecois towards their variety of French, proposed by Luc Ostiguy (Trois Rivières University) and Kristin Reinke (Mainz University), can demonstrate how dubbing of foreign films can be regarded as a situation whereby the speaker communities express identity conflicts issued from different roles of the same language in international, national and regional context. Finally, Sabine Schwarze and Franz Meier (Augsburg University) discuss the role of language for identity formation in Canada and Europe in a contrastive perspective and determine a number of analogies and differences in the perception of language regionalization in the German State of Bavaria and the francophone Canadian province of Quebec, both of which

have developed a strong and unique identity based on a notion of shared cultural and historical values, granting these values a special status within the federal state.

The foci of the three sections overlap, of course, so isolating them is not meant to suggest that they can be thought about separately; and while each of the contributions – regardless of whether it is focused on one national context or is structured comparatively – looks at specific phenomena in light of a set of disciplinary questions, they all revolve around questions that resonate strongly beyond their immediate context of application. Thus, this volume hopefully contributes not only to an urgently necessary interdisciplinary dialogue on such crucial issues as migration, citizenship, and regionalization, but also to an understanding of area studies that interrogates the specific constellations of a country or a transnational region as embedded in processes that go beyond the context under discussion. Canada, Quebec, and the comparative angle deployed in the contributions to this volume provide thus a starting point for the further investigation of structures, processes, and lives that are, to put it once again with Brand, “doubled, tripled, conjugated” (2005: 5) – not only in the Canadian city.

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