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Solidarities of citizenship

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This essay contrasts the trajectory of Engin Isin's work since Being Political (2002) with a very different intellectual path pursued among scholars of a younger generation. Isin moves away from his initial critiques of citizenship and 10 years later proposes "citizenship without frontiers," a way of understanding emancipatory interventions of active citizens in opposition to state violence. During this same time frame, other political theorists began to reject "citizenship" entirely. Whereas, Isin's oeuvre since Being Political incorporates the principles of creativity and resistance of "being political" into a more expansive concept of "citizenship," other theorists began denouncing citizenship as of a piece with colonialism, capitalism, and neoliberalism. Such reactions expressly rejected efforts to recuperate citizenship for causes that oppose domination and oppression. This essay analyzes arguments antagonistic to citizenship claims through the lens of Isin's work, focusing in particular on competing views on nativism, Indigeneity, and nationality. The Conclusion considers recent examples of activist citizens and citizens without frontiers pursuing political solidarities along the lines Isin proposes.[1]

1. Introduction

1.1. Engin Isin's being political

Genealogies of Citizenship (2002) (*BP*)[2] proposes that "citizenship" from antiquity through modernity is antagonistic to being political.[3] "[C]itizenship," Isin claims, is that particular point of view of the dominant, which constitutes itself as a universal point of view—the point of view of those who dominate the city and who have constituted their point of view as natural by representing the city as a unity.... being political is that moment when the naturalness of the dominant virtues is called into question and their arbitrariness revealed (275).

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1   Many thanks to the anonymous reviewers and Engin Isin for thoughtful and extremely helpful comments; this essay was written with the support of the Durham University Institute of Advanced Study.

2   "*BP*" is used to denote the book; "BP" references the phrase "being political".

3   If citizenship in Greek antiquity was achieved by warfare, colonization, and enslavement, in modernity citizenship is the culmination of something like Foucauldian disciplinary operations. The chapters move through epochs chronologically to highlight examples of becoming and being "political." Max Weber's ([1905] 1930) iron cage, Michel Foucault's ([1975] 1979) disciplinary power, and Manuel Castells (1989) and Saskia Sassen's (1991,1996) global cities provide the intellectual lineage for the spaces and technologies of extinguishing "being political," in particular by creating a market economy that puts power into the hands of professionals and not just laissez-faire capitalists. Such networks and technologies, Isin explains, evacuate "the political" from policy-making.

When Isin recalls his earlier discussion of the Parisian revolutionary sansculottes, "who claimed themselves as legitimate citizens," these are not providing examples of citizenship done right, but, Isin writes, "exposing the arbitrary foundations of [citizenship's] superiority" (2002; p. 275). Although Isin provides several fascinating historical examples of those who become political in the name of citizenship, the monograph concludes by calling citizenship an "unstable and invented tradition through which certain groups have established their dominance," a heuristic that radically distinguishes those who stake claims in league with state authorities from the anti-oppressive, poetic possibilities of "speaking against injustice" as a way of being political Isin embraces (2002; p. 277).

The purpose of this essay is to engage the problem and method of Isin's *BP* with the historical distance of the last two decades. In particular, I want to contrast the trajectory of Isin's work subsequent to *BP*—when Isin develops a new conception of "citizenship"—with a very different intellectual path pursued among scholars of a younger generation, who reject "citizenship" entirely. Whereas, Isin's oeuvre since *BP* incorporates the principles of creativity and resistance of *BP-s* concept of "being political" into a more expansive concept of "citizenship," others have in fact embraced the sorts of arguments he presents in *BP* and developed strong arguments *against* democratic, republican "citizenship," including Coulthard (2014) and Brandzel (2016), whose monographs synthesize and advance claims that view citizenship as of a piece with oppressive discourses imposed by Western Europeans indifferent to the plight of those subjugated by institutions coterminous with White supremacism and settler colonialism.

Just as Isin notes that the meanings of concepts he elucidates emerge from specific political contexts, it is worthwhile to observe that the political, intellectual, and legal history and problems Isin narrates are from the perspective of the immediate post-Soviet collapse and triumphalism of neo-liberalism and globalization of the 1990's, and then the U.S. occupations in the Middle East, including Afghanistan and especially Iraq. The lies and atrocities that arose when the U.S. responded to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 by war and not law enforcement ushered in a massive retreat from the "civil rights" and "rule of law" brand on which the U.S. had relied during the Cold War to sway Third World elites and publics away from Soviet alliances. Still, faced with British and U.S. governments running roughshod over laws, treaties, and global institutions, Isin nonetheless pursued efforts to make use of a "citizenship" concept other critics of post-colonialism rejected. What is noteworthy is that Isin in 2002 soundly rejects liberal concepts, but subsequently finds in citizenship potential accommodations to a politics that is emancipatory and antithetical to domination.[4]

10 years later, in *Citizens Without Frontiers* (2012), "being political" is "politics without frontiers," which also means "citizens without frontiers" (12). Insofar as citizenship conveys an

institutional form of being political, Isin's move to find possibilities for justice in citizenship allows for new possibilities in law. Although Isin focuses on citizenship against or outside law, his location of citizenship as a site for upending domination also encourages law's appropriation by a certain form of sovereignty (Stevens, 2022). The disagreement between Isin and more recent critics of citizenship and sovereignty invites investigation as to the political commitments and implications of their differences.

Among the many political questions *BP* tracks through its analysis of citizenship is the problem of solidarity and alliances crucial for mobilizing challenges to an oppressive status quo. Some solidarities are better than others. Although Isin does not state the difference so bluntly, the dividing line between solidarities of which he approves and those he criticizes appears to track the difference between those that are based on status interpellated by a government or other sovereigns, including hegemonic discourses of identities experienced as inherited, on the one hand, and solidarities of communities that are synchronic and innovative, on the other. Focusing on solidarities of citizenship in selected texts by Isin written since 2002, in conversation with Jodi Dean's *Solidarity of Strangers: Feminism after Identity Politics* (1996) reveals a repertoire and context for representing political responses to identities experienced as acquired intergenerationally quite different from those of scholars who, in recent years, have been rejecting the post-foundational, communicative, political, and legal solidarities to which Dean and Isin are committed.

By highlighting shifts in Isin's thought and by explicating exemplary passages from his work, we can notice and contrast his claims about what I am calling "solidarities of citizenship" with arguments from writers who stick to the critique of citizenship Isin offers in *BP* and promote solidarities of intergenerational identities (Stevens, 1999, 2009). These projects, clearly at odds with the post-foundational and especially queer theory and politics for which Coulthard (2014; p. 157-58) and Brandzel (2016; see esp. p. 70–99) claim to support, prioritize the political efficacy of idiomatic, already materialized solidarities of intergenerational groups over the seemingly abstract, disappointing, and arguably exclusionary spaces of liberal citizenship. The conclusion describes a project to which Isin and other scholars, artists, and activists have contributed, to make explicit and further mobilize already existing solidarities of citizenship.

2. From being political (2002) to citizens without frontiers (2012)

2.1. Being political (2002)

Isin in *BP* asserts an antagonism between being political and citizenship he rescinds in later work. But other frameworks initiated here persist in later publications, especially attention to people mobilized by causes that harm others more than themselves. While highlighting how citizenship in Greek antiquity is tied to warfare and enslavement, and thus depends on narratives of citizenship as autochthonous and hereditary (2002; p. 54), *BP*s historicization and periodization of citizenship, and the focus on active citizenship in modern European cities—i.e., citizenship as doing, not being—implicitly and overtly rejects Hegelian and

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4   The differences between Isin's openness to practices and interventions grounded in European humanism and the adversarial stance of Coulthard and Brandzel, as well as many other critics emerging in this time frame, including Jasbir Puar (2007), Joseph Massad (2007), and Jakeet Singh (2022), are occurring amid geopolitical events of which all the writers are well-aware.

Heideggerian narratives' emphases on national solidarities and citizenship derived as seemingly given.[5]

Published in 2002, *BP* reflects a commitment of research and writing that is consistent with its main development prior to the attacks of 9/11/2001, a time frame in which Left critics were more concerned with globalization and neo-liberalism than state-sanctioned discrimination based on nationality, ethnicity, race, sex, or sexual orientation. Thus, although *BP* rejects historical nationalism, Isin here does not focus on the fringe movements of European nationalists such as Jean-Marie Le Pen. For Isin, as for many other critics in this time frame, especially those influenced by Foucault and the realization of the European Union, the key problem was the power/knowledge of the market economy. Isin in 2002 is responding to the spirit of Weber's modern, atomized, bourgeois individual (Weber, [1905] 1930, [1921] 1978), a figure more suited as a touchstone for conceptualizing estrangements of the early twenty first century than, say, the aggrieved neo-fascists of France or Germany.

2.2. Acts of citizenship (2008)

A key difference between Isin's subsequent work on citizenship and that of the anti-citizenship crowd is the very different theories of solidarity informing their understandings of political community. Isin's citizenship is bounded primarily by shared sensibilities of injustice that motivate acts of resistance against institutionalized oppression, and is without territorial frontiers. Though these acts often require collective organization, they also may be undertaken by individuals who themselves have no special material self-interest in the outcome. Moved by what Isin is calling norms of "citizenship," people dedicate at minimum their time and resources, and even risk or lose their lives on behalf of eradicating injustice.

There are several ways of characterizing the impulses Isin describes, many clustered around practices of "altruism" or

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5   In the Hegelian teleology, the rational individual of Hobbesian, Lockean, and even Kantian social contract theory renounces his immediate individual self-interest narrowly conceived and lives through, and on behalf of, the nation-state ([1821] 1967, esp. Pt. III). Hegel (1967) argues that through spirit [Geist] and reason each generation develops and realizes its specific attachments to the political sensibilities of its respective time and place. Martin Heidegger agrees with Hegel on the virtues and necessity of these attachments, but characterizes our embeddedness in nations and other intergenerational communities as consequent to a sort of accidental "thrownness" (Geworfenheit) ([1927] 1962) that nonetheless, ideally, generates robust commitments. Their theories are crucial to the narratives of the nation's political significance on which the theorists discussed herein rely and to which they are responding. Especially important is that Hegel and Heidegger infer and establish an ontology of nationality without invoking biology: we should inhabit a world as though we have given nationalities because this is rational and a worthy imperative, not because doing so is human nature. (To avoid the methodological nationalism of singling for special treatment words that are non-English, I avoid their italicization).

"charity," especially when Isin highlights commitments to groups other than those into which one is born. In contrast with theorists advocating reliance on identity politics, Isin problematizes the particularism of conduct in the name of intergenerational groups and characterizes it as anathema to real citizenship. Thus, Isin's scholarship moves from identifying citizenship with an affinity for one's own nation-state to asserting that citizenship properly understood is a resource to disrupt nationalism, racism, and other identity politics.

In "Acts of Citizenship," (Isin, 2008) an essay published in a collection Isin co-edited (Isin and Nielsen, 2008) 6 years after *Being Political*, citizenship and "being political" are no longer understood as oppositional. In *BP*, "[b]ecoming political involves questioning such essential categories as 'woman' or 'immigrant' as given and assumes they that they were produced in the process of constituting citizenship and that they are internally, not externally, related to it," a characterization Isin refers to as an "assumption [that] has significant consequences for investigating citizenship" (2002; p. 17), that is, for revealing citizenship as coterminous with the operations of national citizenship and its exclusions. In *BP* (2002), Isin takes citizenship to mean what advocates of national citizenship such as Walzer (1983) and Tamir (1995) say it means.

Isin in 2008 rejects a definition of citizenship as axiomatically tied to inclusions and exclusions of seemingly essential, national identities and emphasizes a new heuristic of citizenship, one grounded in the essential qualities of thoughtful, public, politically engaged acts. A section captioned "Investigating Acts of Citizenship: Becoming Activist Citizens" explains that "how we become political" is also how "we enact ourselves as citizens," as well as strangers, outsiders, and aliens (2008; p. 37-8). "Being political" and citizenship alike are the "practices through which claims are articulated and subjectivities formed" (Isin, 2008; p. 17, citing Benhabib, 2004; Soysal, 1994); the communicative acts of Jürgen Habermas (Isin, 2008; p. 24, citing Habermas (1998)); and politics as the creation of beginnings (Isin, 2008; p. 27, citing Arendt, [1969] 1972; p. 179; 1958; p. 177; 2005; p. 322), as well as the "acting out of uncanniness" responsive to one's arbitrary location in the world (Isin, 2008; p. 32, citing Heidegger ([1927] 1962); p. 255 SZ 276; 254, SZ 275).

While Isin draws on recognizable spokespersons for a humanist if not entirely liberal narrative of citizenship, "Acts of Citizenship" nonetheless rejects a key quality citizenship often evokes, namely commitment to the law, though the rule of law *per se* is not attacked. Isin continues to represent law as the static antithesis of politics. Drawing on insights from Jacques Derrida, Isin distinguishes between law and politics as calculable and justice and the political as incalculable. Isin writes, "The upshot is that politics constitutes relatively enduring and routinized ways of being that can be investigated only through the political when it ruptures these ways of being" [2008, 36, citing Isin (2008)]. *Activist* citizens, in contrast with *active* citizens, thus best epitomize what it means to become and be political. "While activist citizens engage in writing scripts and creating the scene, active citizens follow scripts and participate in scenes that are already created" (2008; p. 32). Isin valorizes political interventions that are innovative and seek to break routines, and throughout is committed to these as

acts of citizens and not a more diffuse understanding of being political.[6]

2.3. Citizens without frontiers (2012)

In *Citizens Without Frontiers* (2012), Isin takes up the problem of solidarity as one of "connectivity," a phrasing that seems more consistent with the project of communicative action, for which solidarity is a symptom of connections that arise from the mutual engagement in a community's self-conscious, collective pursuit of rationality, as Isin characterizes the "politics of connectivity" (Isin, 2012; p. 83). As opposed to solidarity, which requires many refinements to distinguish the Habermasian variety from the exclusive communities criticized by Isin, Dean, and others, connectivity requires that separate phenomenological solids—of individuals, nations, races, and sexes, for instance—do more than abstractly recognize each other but also realize their fluidities and ties among them. Instead of citizenship necessarily implying the static, "bounded," identity Isin locates in *BP*'s intellectual history of citizenship, *Citizenship Without Frontiers* proposes we "rename [citizenship] by shifting our focus... to the acting subject" (11). Isin aspires for "we the people" to become a very specific embodiment of "we the connected," meaning that we recognize in our communications *as citizens* "what makes [our] acts creative, inventive, and autonomous" (87).

As is the case in his previous writings, many examples of acts of citizenship include opposition to sovereign law enforcement, including an Egyptian citizen who created a Facebook page and slogan "We are Khaled Said" that became a movement expressing outrage over the government's brazen cruelties, including Said's death from a police beating (2012; p. 89); climate camps disrupting polluting activities in several countries in Europe and North American (97); an aid worker organizing a petition signed by 60,000 Darfur residents, denied presentation by the British House of Commons, its intended audience (136–37); and a mother in the Maldives who insisted on an investigation of her son's death in police custody, after which she pursued activism tied to democratizing the country and voting out the military government (138–39). These are distinguished from dangerous appropriations of citizenship, including by nationalists fed by the sovereign beast, such as Minutemen in the U.S. who dressed as police and murdered a father and daughter residing in Arizona (47–8).

Nonetheless, despite Isin highlighting dangers of the sovereign beast, the rule of law itself is not rejected, and is presented as providing resources for holding accountable those in power, or throwing monkey wrenches that can disrupt business-as-usual, as when Tim DeChristopher ended up successfully bidding on a parcel of land the Bureau of Land Management was putting up for auction over the protests of environmental activists, including

DeChristopher (Isin, 2012; p. 110-13). Of DeChristopher's ultimate conviction for "disrupting a federal auction," in the wake of the prosecution arguing that "The rule of law is the bedrock of our civilized society, not acts of 'civil disobedience' committed in the name of the cause of the day" (Isin, 2012, quoting from Goodell, 2011), Isin quotes DeChristopher's apt retort: "'[T]he rule of law is dependent upon a government that is willing to abide by the law. Disrespect for the rule of law begins when the government believes itself and its corporate sponsors to be above the law'" (Isin, 2012; p. 111, quoting from Goldberg, 2011). Whereas, law in *BP* was either absent from or antagonistic to being political, i.e., acts of creativity, innovation, and just resistance, in *CWF*, the spirit of the law is an ideal vehicle for citizenship done right, that is, citizenship as connectivity and without frontiers.

Building on observations by Arendt (2005) and a liberal strain in Derrida's "The Force of Law" ([1989] [2002]), a work that reprises Plato and Socrates on the possibilities of justice in the law, Isin notes possible tensions not only between justice and the law, but between the spirit and the letter of the law. When the two are in tension, "law must give way, since the spirit of the law is an expression of negotiation and struggle over a long period of time..." (2012; p. 118, paraphrasing Arendt, 1972; p. 99). This is not because of some vaguely intuited view of statutory construction that someone like Dworkin (1997) might attempt. Rather, referencing Derrida, Isin sees the spirit of the law as itself infused with justice (2012; p. 118). Instead of citizenship being the willful subservience to authorities and diminutions of individual freedom in exchange for social order, Isin grounds the highest expressions of the law in the most creative and intelligent forms of citizenship: "[N]o matter what political and social theorists may say about citizenship, people have proved themselves as flexible, intelligent, if not ingenious practitioners of the art of performing or enacting their rights and the rights of others" (2012; p. 150). These are the practices to which Isin turns for his definition of citizenship, founded ultimately on principles of justice (151).

Not surprisingly, a project affirming citizenship as the intelligent pursuit of justice advanced through recognition of mutual connectivity has no room for the persistent identity politics of racist nationalists. But it also excludes claims of epistemology and recognition emerging in the wake of anti-colonial nationalist movements (Fanon, [1961] 1968), as well as aesthetics that confine artistic productions and criticisms to outputs of one's "own" community as putatively unique and siloed from those into which one did not enter at birth (see, e.g., Mishan, 2022). Noting insights from Sidney Tarrow's work supportive of cosmopolitanism (Tarrow, 2005), Isin explains his opposition to a "politics of autochthonous (indigenous) identification that re-enacts the ideas of sovereignty, territory, and people" (2012; p. 159). Isin writes, "[E]ach nation has been invented and founded on violence" (162). Between *BP* and *CWF*, Isin appears to have found through Arendt, Derrida, and Foucault possibilities in a democratic republican tradition that could be drawn on for purposes of a newly imagined citizenship, one that appropriates analyses supportive of communicative action within and outside of government institutions and uses this to explain acts of solidarity based on connections citizenship activates instead of silences.

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6   The contrast between activist and active citizens as stated may need some tweaking to accomplish Isin's objectives. The storming of the Capitol on January 6, 2022 was done by those who fit Isin's criteria of "activist citizens." Still, this was not a "rupture." The upheaval did not disturb the inertia of unaccountable power accumulated in intergenerational institutions, organizations, and families.

3. Against citizenship

In the wake of 9/11, the debate between globalization's advocates and its critics quickly became an anachronism. Francis Fukuyama could no longer defend a teleology of a triumphant liberal capitalism (Fukuyama, 1993) any more than progressive critics could denounce it. The decade between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the onslaught of the war on terror and reterritorialization was perhaps a blip and not a neo-liberal trajectory.[7] Isin's publications promoting acts of citizenship thus appear as efforts to shore up and build on still usable foundations of a humanist enlightenment. Instead of attacking citizenship for its inevitable incorporation of bourgeois market values, as occurs in *BP*, Isin turns to citizenship as a bulwark against the worst expressions of capitalism and nativism alike.

Other theorists took a different path. Instead of recognizing the re-emerging tribalism as troubling their political commitments' oppositional to globalization, many advocates made use of nationalist discourses. Relying on ideas of Fanon and others who used ideas about the "nation" to criticize imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, and neo-liberalism, scholars developed theoretical frameworks that either rejected or simply disregarded the insights of deconstruction, post-structuralism, and the discursive turn more generally. They favored heuristics in support of policies that prioritized claims made in the name of essentialized identities and were unmoved by the critiques on which Isin continued to rely in his attacks on solidarities, connectivities, and communicative actions tethered to a hereditable status.

Isin writes, "[W]e have a chance to rescue the political subject from the claws and pangs of the sovereign beast by naming it as a 'citizen without frontiers'; but just at that moment of possible rescue, we are delivering to the beast the soul of the political subject" (2012; p. 46 citing Derrida, 2010). Isin's call to question institutions and discourses of domination was unanswered by groups interpolating political membership based on fantasies about intergenerational beliefs and practices. Distinguishing their work as "Left" means that, despite the reliance on ideas about the nation shared with the governments of Tony Blair, George W. Bush, Benjamin Netanyahu, and many others, their post-colonial critics sought to harness nationalism to oppose these more powerful antagonists. That is, if the governments of Western democracies wanted to attack and appropriate resources from people of color in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, then some reacted by asserting their own sovereignties on behalf of newly created nations forged from ancestral political societies.

Two monographs emblematic of the Left's attacks on citizenship and embrace of methodological nationalism (Chernilo, 2006) are Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014) and Brandzel, *Against Citizenship: The Violence of the Normative* (2016). Whereas, Isin's work harnesses critiques of the nationalisms of winners as well as losers in colonial struggles, Coulthard and Brandzel defend and promote national ideologies that empower some individuals' whose ancestors were enslaved, colonized, or genocidally decimated.

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7   Thanks to political scientist Richard Falk for this insight.

3.1. Red skin, white masks

Coulthard's work engages deeply with political projects premised on Habermasian proposals for the public sphere. Coulthard focuses in particular on arguments Seyla Benhabib develops in *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in a Global Era* (2002). Whereas, some influential theorists of Indigenous solidarities and sovereignties lay out just one side of the argument, that in support of claims made on behalf of Indigenous nations—I am thinking in particular of work by Simpson (2014) and Lightfoot (2016)—Coulthard stages and responds to Benhabib's Habermasian (Habermas, 1996) arguments on behalf of rules she proposes for political society, namely "egalitarian reciprocity," "voluntary self-ascription," and "freedom of exit and association" [2014; p. 83, citing Benhabib (2002); p. 19], all seemingly quite sensible requirements for a deliberative model of politics and principles that resonate in Isin's concept of citizenship. Coulthard, however, rejects these approaches as correlated with European colonialism and instead turns to values that he claims hearken back to principles of "our people," (51, 63), though the substantive arguments on which Coulthard leans most heavily for his defense of the nation are those of the avowedly European supremacist G.W.F. Hegel and, especially, his intellectual progeny Frantz Fanon.

Coulthard's primary objective is not a world safe for creativity, imagination, and justice as abstracted across global communities, but rather the preservation and empowerment of Indigenous nations. He praises movements that offer a revaluation of culture and identity for the purpose of "pride and empowerment" that could "help jolt the colonized …to conceive of and construct alternatives to the colonial project itself" (43–4), implying a negative dialectic of resistance instrumental to recovering land occupied by colonizer descendants, and reclaiming destroyed cultural heritages. Coulthard emphasizes that since European institutions of sovereignty, including citizenship, destroyed peoples of the Americas, these institutions are effectively disqualified as sources of resistance for opposing injustice. Drawing on the suffering and oppression endured as a result of a state emerging with projects of imperialism and colonialism, Coulthard questions the state's advantages and necessity (48), as well as the ideals that inhere in the rule of law it supposedly upholds.

Whereas Isin attacks the exclusions of any form of nationalism, Coulthard, relying on work by Dirlik and Prazniak (2001), advocates for an essentialism that is in turns strategic (Spivak, 1985; p. 184) and also ontological (see esp. Coulthard, 2014; p. 61). Coulthard writes:

> [I]t is crucial to "distinguish between claims to identity of the powerful and powerless, because the powerless may face such threats, including on occasion the threat of extinction, that is intellectually, politically, and morally irresponsible to encompass within one notion of 'essentialism.'" (Coulthard, 2014; p. 99, quoting Dirlik and Prazniak, 2001; p. 9).

The intuition that the powerful and powerless should not expect identical responses from political institutions is not all that radical—indeed it is axiomatic for the analyses of John Rawls *Theory of Justice* (1971). A worldview that sees intergenerational identities as the basis for redressing wrongs against ancestors,

figures created by the kinship rules of a specific political society—be it the French nation-state or the pre- or post-colonial Dene —stokes ressentiment but does not address substantive short- and long-term priorities, from protecting the environment from rapacious mining to protecting non-Jews from Israeli state violence, on Isin's account. Claims tied to identities that have been marginalized and oppressed and those advanced in the name of European nation-states are equally illegitimate (2012, e.g., p. 159).[8]

3.2. Against citizenship (2016)

Amy Brandzel's opposition to Isin's project of defending political struggles in the name of citizenship is of course stated bluntly in her title. Whereas, Isin in *CWF* offers vignettes of bravery pursued on behalf of communities of which one is not a member—e.g., Rachel Corrie's defiance of Israeli bulldozers in occupied territories—Brandzel argues on behalf of Hawaiian solidarities that are based exclusively on intergenerational inheritances. Like Coulthard, Brandzel expresses impatience with critiques of identity politics leveled against those who are not White, cis-males, and heterosexuals. In her defense of laws that afford voting rights to descendants of the first occupiers of Hawaii and deny them to descendants of those who arrived later, Brandzel criticizes "*the logics of comparative anti-intersectionality*, whereby the categories of race, Indigeneity, gender, and sexuality are segregated and set in opposition to each other" (34. emphasis in original). Brandzel here is generalizing from Kimberlé Crenshaw's critique of civil rights precedents that require plaintiffs to make claims based on *either* race *or* sex, a requirement that makes courts inherently hostile to claims of discrimination specific to Black women (Crenshaw, 1991). Insofar as Hawaiian Kakalian plaintiffs have concerns specific to their communities that are not recognized by Fifteenth Amendment case law, Brandzel, like Coulthard, rejects the possibility of negotiations among porous synchronic communities Isin's work recognizes and invigorates and affirms, and instead justifies exclusions based on old-fashioned communities of descent.

Brandzel and Coulthard reject the possibility that groups differently positioned from cis-male, White, heterosexual, non-Indigenous peoples, or those not burdened by other inherited group attributes, and their related political-economic disadvantages, can substantively or procedurally obtain fair outcomes through institutions or practices of citizenship. Brandzel notes that those "across the political spectrum" rely on "comparative anti-intersectional ways of knowing." She claims, "These epistemologies are used in order to safeguard normative citizenship by denying the possibility of intersectional identities

and intersectional connectivities" (34). The concern is that a law used for ensuring Black people are not denied the right to vote in Alabama because they are Black improperly disregards the specificity of the Indigenous community's legitimate prerogative to exclude from voting for a local commission White (and Black) citizens, including those whose ancestors moved to Hawaii over 200 years ago, as was the case for Harold Rice, the plaintiff excluded from voting for the local commission (*Rice* [2000] at 13). According to the criteria,

> 'Native Hawaiian' means any descendant of not less than one-half part of the races inhabiting the Hawaiian Islands previous to 1778, as defined by the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended; provided that the term identically refers to the descendants of such blood quantum of such aboriginal peoples which exercised sovereignty and subsisted in the Hawaiian Islands in 1778 and which peoples thereafter continued to reside in Hawaii.[9]

Brandzel claims she is offering a "queer" critique of the "non-recognition for non-normative kinship practices" (2016; p. 15), but instead of questioning exclusions constituted by conventional kinship practices, she applauds these and other efforts along these lines, such as Indigenous demands for ancestral homelands (2016; p. 93, 101; Stevens, 2018).

Isin's citizens hold the secret to create radically different futures, including by enacting scripts that reject the intergenerational ties and narratives Brandzel endorses. Brandzel writes, "Queering the faiths in citizenship, law, and temporality creates a space in which decolonial, queer, feminist, and critical race scholars and activists work toward reimagining and restructuring accountability in order to see oppression, seek change, and envision justice in the present" (Brandzel, 2016; p. 167). But Michael Warner (1993, xx), in *Fear of a Queer Planet*, a key work establishing what would count as "queer theory," and elsewhere questions intergenerational identities for their reliance on reproductive narratives:

> Patrilineal succession may have ceased to be a self-evident gloss on the social order or its continuity from past to future, but the result is that everyone now has generational consciousness—Not just fathers and eldest sons. More and more detached from kinship roles, modern individuals have had to develop styles of self -transcendence, of linking themselves to a posterity so as not to be barren and sterile...Perhaps the most salient example is the modern notion of race, which stamps people with ancestral continuity and reproductive identity regardless of their own reproductive activity, grounding identity in biology. When people speak about legacies and heritages they speak metaphorically; but these are now general concerns, not just a private interest of heirs (Warner, 2000; p. 777).

The "ancestral continuity" that Warner subjects to criticism is precisely what Brandzel defends, making it difficult to understand

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why Brandzel uses the word "queer" in proximity to her celebration of Kakalian communities and claims on their behalf. Coulthard and Brandzel prioritize the denomination of grievances and resentments through discourses of race and nation (see esp. Coulthard, 2014, Ch. 4), a strategy Isin soundly rejects for reasons similar to those of Warner (Isin, 2012; p. 29, 161-62), who also references Benedict Anderson's analysis of nations as imagined communities (Warner, 2000; p. 23, note 13).

4. Where does this leave citizenship as "being political"?

In addition to the heuristic chasm between Isin's post-*BP* texts and work by Coulthard and Brandzel, there is a further problem of their case selection. In "Acts of Citizenship" and *Citizens Without Frontiers*, Isin's scenarios highlight individuals pushing back as citizens against policies of neo-liberalism, militarism, and apartheid, and envisions these as the cutting edge of an emerging cosmopolitanism. Coulthard and Brandzel select very different cases of citizenship: White or Indigenous citizens using courts to overturn laws selectively protecting some prerogatives of sovereignty negotiated in previous generations. Citizenship for Isin is a U.S.-American who loses her life in a fight against the expropriations and oppression of people Coulthard and Brandzel would say were not her "own" people, but with whom Rachel Corrie nonetheless experienced an urgent and reciprocated bond (Isin, 2012; p. 18-19). Citizenship for Coulthard is Canadian courts using the plight of Indigenous women oppressed by tribal patriarchy to undermine, say, Dene national sovereignty. And citizenship for Brandzel is a White man successfully challenging a local law excluding those who were not native Hawaiian Kakalian from eligibility to elect trustees to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (103). While Coulthard advocates Indigenous peoples mobilizing as claimants and not subjects (Isin, 2008; p. 18), Coulthard would not sign onto Isin's further criterion that they act based "not on fixed identities but fluid subject positions" (2008; p. 19).

5. Methods and solidarities of citizenship

In explaining the method of *BP*'s approach to definitions of being political, citizenship, politics, and much more relevant to considerations of the solidarities of citizens, Isin writes, "The conditions for solidaristic, agonistic, and alienating assemblages" are "matters of genealogical investigation and cannot be determined theoretically" (2002; p. 25). Isin is explaining why, for purposes of understanding citizenship, he is carefully delineating the challenges of different political communities and not simply drawing on assertions by canonical authors that may speak to separate and unrelated problems. In line with Foucault, Isin is rejecting the conventions of prominent academic political theorists or philosophers who analyze logical or political implications of concepts extracted from their contexts. Isin's statement about his genealogical efforts in the context of *BP* and later publications prompts observations about difficulties

of pursuing a Foucauldian method that are not unique to Isin's interventions.

First, although Isin, like many others, is embracing what Foucault calls genealogy (2019 [1971]), Isin and others, including Foucault, are creating advantageous *histories* of some sophistication and counteracting rote authoritative narratives that see the present as a necessary imperative of previous generations, at least if we credit Nietzsche's own heuristics in which he clearly is attacking genealogists and promoting history (Historie) instead (Nietzsche, 1997, 2011; Stevens, 2003). Second, *BP*, in addition to its explications of political communities typologized as Polis, Civitas, Christianapolis, Eutopolis, and Metropolis, grounds meta-claims about group conflict on work in the social sciences. Especially noteworthy is Isin's reliance on assertions by Henri Tajfel (Isin, 2002; p. 23-25, citing Tajfel (1981); p. 228), a social psychologist whose work is widely cited by scholars of international relations in particular to advance as ontology the claim that, for instance, "Individuals have a special affinity for other members of the in-group and discriminate against members of the out-group, a phenomenon that has been used to explain pervasive forms of prejudice along racial, ethnic, religious, and gender lines" (Schramm and Stark, 2020; p. 524, citing Tajfel, 1981; p. 96). Leaving aside that studies often have produced findings with weak or no support for this thesis but are represented as otherwise, including by Tajfel (Stevens, 2009; Introduction, 279, notes 159–162), the discussion is symptomatic of the impossibility of conveying information about the past that is not implicitly or explicitly represented through our present scholarly mise-en-scène. Isin is noticing and narrating histories of group strife and warfare that reveal certain common characteristics and thus appear to seem something like human nature, observations that Isin's own research falsifies, as discussed above.

Third, and related to this last point, we cannot escape relying on theory for the purpose of determining and representing the conditions of different ways of being political and acts of citizenship, as Isin's subsequent work clearly demonstrates. "Act 9" in *CWF*, for instance, characterizes a 2007 campaign called "Strangers into Citizens" (2012; p. 58). Isin describes efforts by English citizens organized through their "faith groups, unions, and community organizations" to press the government to expand citizenship to include those understood as outsiders to their nation (58). "Act 10" describes the global response to the death of a 28-year-old Egyptian beaten by police. "We are All Khaled Said" was a campaign initiated by an Egyptian marketing executive who then himself was arrested and psychologically tortured for 12 days (2012; p. 90). The executive was not at any special risk of police brutality until he created a movement of solidarity, his own included, with Khaled Said. Act 11 describes the founding and globalization of "No One is Illegal," a movement that again was led and supported by citizens offended by their own governments (2012; p. 94). This is not to dismiss the widespread counterexamples of nationalist movements that instantiate the laws to which "No One Is Illegal" is responding. Worth noting from the cumulative information in the cases brought to our attention by the authors discussed in this essay is an indeterminacy of people's responses to group differences understood as given or natural, from the Latin *nasci*, meaning birth.

The challenge here ultimately is not methodological but political. Should we advocate for narratives that promote ideas that "we the people"-s values, histories, and aspirations are inherently and immutably incommensurable? Or should we create narratives that reject and strive to reverse political claims and grievances tied to phenomenologically heritable group identities and hierarchies?

6. Conclusion

One possibility for overcoming the political gulf between solidarities of citizenship understood as an inherently hierarchical mechanism of exclusion (Isin, 2002), not to mention a racist corollary to Western imperialism and settler colonialism (Coulthard, 2014; Brandzel, 2016), on the one hand, and citizenship as the cutting edge of being political (Isin, 2008; 2012) on the other, is to assume as axiomatic to any political debate the existence of individuals differently advantaged and disadvantaged due to circumstances of group solidarities over which they have no control, the most well-known version of which is Rawls' (1991 [1971]) *Theory of Justice*. Brandzel and Coulthard of course rightly would reject this approach for its methodological individualism, abstracted deontological heuristics, and utter disregard for the laws and intuitions undergirding imperialism, colonialism, and patriarchy, for instance. But their arguments also would reject a solidarity of citizenship that acknowledges structural, historical specificities of exploitation, unjust enrichment, and consequent political-economic inequality, and the goal of superseding them for purposes of a governance that institutionalizes connectivity, responsibility, and accountability, the ambition of Dean (1996), who advances "an ideal of solidarity attuned to the vulnerability of contingent identities and to the universalist claims of democratic societies" (Dean, 1996; p. 3). Whereas, Isin focuses on acts of citizenship already immanent, Dean's argument is more forward-looking. Isin's acts of citizenship that emblematize the best of being political are in response to unjust laws and policies. Dean argues for constitutions and laws that might institutionalize the principles she elaborates.

One challenge is that narratives and imaginations moved by the idea of intergenerational connections have been far more successful in instantiating solidarities than those pursuing solidarities of the sort of citizenship described by Isin or by Dean. Two recent efforts to create solidarities of citizenship bear mention. One is the Global Council for Political Renewal, an organization that includes local politicians from across several continents and countries. Their web page states: "The purposes of the GCPR are to promote the cooperation of politicians at all levels across the world, encourage a high standard of ethics and civic discourse in political life, and strive for global peace and justice."[10] The group is only just forming and will have its first open meeting in April 2023.

Another project draws on insights by thinkers who show an overt or implicit appreciation of health, elenchus, and intelligence

for their definitions of justice—including Socrates, Plato, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzche, Henry David Thoreau, Rosa Luxemburg, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Jacques Derrida. The "Declaration of Citizenship" emerges from a "critique of inequalities that perpetuate disparities in terms of longevity, resources, and political prerogatives" and "offers a space for re-imagining connections, communities, and freedoms that benefit the 99%" (Demetriou and Stevens, 2021).[11] Instead of relying on current global institutions, the vast majority of which assume the necessity of nations, or waiting for these alliances to magically emerge, those supporting the Declaration of Citizenship are attempting to make visible the connections among our current acts of citizenship and thus materialize our mutual commitments and work as solidarities without waiting for a new legal-political order. The alternative forms of governance envisioned through such a Declaration prioritizes abolishing laws inconsistent with the condition of mortality, including those constructing exclusions tied to kinship rules, inheritance, and private ownership of land.[12]

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Publisher's note

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10 "Hello World, We are the GCPR." https://www.gcpr.global/.

11 The Declaration of Citizenship was convened by Olga Demetriou and myself. The text reflects contributions from Alfred Babo, Zeljko Blace, Engin Isin, Noora Lori, and Kamal Sadiq. "Declaration of Citizenship" https:declarationofcitizenship.org.

12 For the political theory of federated states and citizenship based on residence, without an overarching global government, see Stevens *States Without Nations: Citizenship for Mortals* (2009) and "Enacting Citizenship for the Healthy Politeia" (2022). For a recent work discussing these and other alternative approaches to political membership, see Harder (2022).

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