

'Transnationalism and the Temporality of Naturalized Citizenship

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Abstract : Citizenship is not only political, but it is also a socio-cultural expectation that naturalized immigrants desire for. However, the outcomes of citizenship desirability are determined by forces outside the individual's control based on legislation and laws that are designed at the macro and exosystemic levels by politicians and policy makers. These laws are then applied to determine the status (permanency or temporariness) of citizenship for immigrants and refugees, but the same laws do not apply to non-immigrant citizens who attain it by birth. While theoretically, citizenship has generally been considered an irrevocable legal status and the highest and most secure legal status one can hold in a state, it is not inviolate for immigrants. While Article 8 of the United Nations Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness provides grounds for revocation of citizenship obtained by immigrants and refugees in host countries, nation-states have their own laws tied to the convention that provide grounds for revocation. Ever since the 9/11 attacks in the USA, there has been a rise in conditional citizenship and the state's withdrawal of citizenship through revocation laws that denaturalize citizens who end up not merely losing their citizenship but also the right to reside in the country of immigration. Because immigrants can be perceived as a security threat, the securitization of citizenship and the legislative changes have been adopted to specifically allow greater discretionary power in stripping people of their citizenship. The paper 'Do We Really Belong Here?' Transnationalism and the Temporality of Naturalized Citizenship examines literature on the temporality of naturalized citizenship and questions whether citizenship, for newcomers (immigrants and refugees), is a protected human right or a privilege. The paper argues that citizenship in a host country is a well sought-after status by newcomers. The question is whether their citizenship, if granted, has a permanent or temporary status and whether it is treated in the same way as that of non-immigrant citizens. The paper further argues that, despite citizenship having generally been considered an irrevocable status in most Western countries, in practice, if not in law, for immigrants and refugees, citizenship comes with strings attached because of policies and laws that control naturalized citizenship. These laws can be used to denationalize naturalized citizens through revocations for those stigmatized as 'undesirables' who are threatened with deportation. Whereas non-immigrant citizens (those who attain it by birth) have absolute right to their citizenship, this is seldom the case for immigrants. This paper takes a multidisciplinary approach using Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the macrosystem and exo-system, to examine and review literature on the temporality of naturalized citizenship and questions whether citizenship is a protected right or a privilege for immigrants. The paper challenges the human rights violation of citizenship revocation and argues for equality of treatment for all citizens despite how they acquired their citizenship. The fragility of naturalized citizenship undermines the basic rights and securities that citizenship status can provide to the person as an inclusive practice in a diverse society.

Keywords : citizenship, citizenship revocation, dual citizenship, human rights, naturalization, naturalized citizenship

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