

Informal World Citizenship

The Debate Between Statist Republicans and Cosmopolitans

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, citizenship theory has seen fierce debates between statist republicans and cosmopolitans. Statist republicans hold that citizenship can only exist at the national level, when it has a direct connection with the state and popular sovereignty. Cosmopolitans, on the other hand, claim that states are an important cause of global inequality, but fail to produce a fulfilling account of cosmopolitan or global citizenship. In this article I coin the notion of informal world citizenship, in an attempt to add a new perspective to the debate. Arguably, world citizenship is already exercised in practice, although it lacks the formalization of current accounts of cosmopolitan citizenship. To illustrate this point, I provide three examples. (1) In France, illegal immigrants have demanded inclusion and legal rights, arguing that although they lack formal documents or ‘papers’ (calling themselves *sans papiers*) they are not illegitimate people and should not be treated as such. (2) In their contesting of an unfair distribution of wealth, the Occupy movement – whether you like them or not – has aimed to influence worldwide politics, rather than individual states. (3) The same can be said about people protesting against nuclear weapons, mostly active in the Seventies and Eighties. Oftentimes these people were not members of the political entities they tried to influence, laying their claims before the world community rather than national governments. Combined, the three examples illustrate how people can exercise political power as global citizens, in a way that bears no direct connection to the popular sovereignty that is central to current cosmopolitan propositions. The concept of informal world citizenship broadens the debate between statist republican and cosmopolitans by showing that global citizenship is not only an ambitious proposal, but to an extent it already exists.

KEYWORDS

Citizenship, Cosmopolitanism, Statism, *Sans Papiers*, Occupy, Nuclear Weapons Protests

Recent years have seen an increasing amount of ‘cosmopolitan’ critiques of mainstream state-centric political philosophy (Pogge 2002; Singer 2004; Held 2011; Appiah 2010). Conventional accounts of political theory are unfulfilling for cosmopolitans, as focusing on what happens within states would supposedly blur the normative issues that matter most – those affecting all humans. Not the state, but the abstract *community of all humans* is the relevant political unit for these authors. In cosmopolitan eyes, politics should be organized accordingly: on the global level (Tijsterman 2014; Held and Archibugi 1995).¹ This normative perspective has led cosmopolitans to propose world citizenship, which does not exclude anybody. On the other side of the debate, statist republicans, the prime opponents of global citizenship, typically argue that although the intentions of cosmopolitans are praiseworthy, they miss the crucial point of what citizenship is about.² For statist republicans, citizenship is necessarily related to the concept of popular

¹ In this article the terms world and global citizenship are used interchangeably.

² This article focuses on the political aspects of citizenship. There are, however, also more legalistic dimensions of citizenship. Sometimes, these types can be found under the denominator “liberal citizenship” (Shafir 1998; Schuck 2002).

sovereignty. Citizens have supreme authority over their states, within which they collectively have “the right to command, and correlatively, the right to be obeyed” (Wolff 1970, 4). Through arguing, deliberating, and voting, citizens can control their shared enterprise. As Oxford philosopher David Miller rigidly argues, cosmopolitan propositions do not deserve the designation citizenship as they do not offer such a *right to power* (Miller 2011).

In this article I propose a new perspective on the debate between cosmopolitans and statist republicans. In the current debate, citizenship is understood as something that is necessarily formalized and related to sovereignty.³ Yet, as I shall explain in the following paragraph, neither of these requirements is essential to citizenship. Arguably, an unformalized type of world citizenship already exists. After analyzing the scholarly debate on citizenship, I offer three examples of how *informal world citizenship* has been exercised in concrete cases. (1) In France, *sans papiers* have demanded inclusion and legal rights, arguing that although they lack formal documents they are not illegitimate people and should not be treated as such. (2) In their contesting of an unfair distribution of wealth, the Occupy movement – whether you like them or not – has aimed to influence worldwide politics, rather than individual states. (3) Similarly, people protesting against nuclear weapons, mostly active in the Seventies and Eighties, laid their claims before the world community rather than national governments. The three examples combined illustrate how people aim to exercise political power as global citizens, in a way that bears no direct connection to the type of sovereignty that is central to the existing conceptions of cosmopolitanism and statist republicanism.

CITIZENSHIP AND STATISM

The statist republican position finds its origins in the Athenian polis and the writings of Aristotle (Pocock 1992, 32). In the Aristotelian ideal, citizens rule their city-state together as partners, “ruling and being ruled in turn” (Aristotle and Saunders 1982, 6.1317b2). The contemporary statist philosopher Thomas Nagel argues for a similar position, contending that “each member plays both as one of the societies subjects and as one of those in whose name it is exercised. One might even say we are all participants in the general will” (Nagel 2005, 128). From the perspective of statist republicanism, citizens collectively form the legislative body of the state, giving them a right to direct its course. Although they oftentimes exercise their right through representatives, citizens are ultimately sovereign in the statist republican conception.

In essence however, citizenship does not *require* a relation to popular sovereignty (Sassen 2002a). Political scientist Gerry Stoker’s definition of citizenship as *membership of a political community*

³ References to “cosmopolitans” and “statist republicans” are used as ideal-types. Not all cosmopolitan or statist republican authors rigidly adhere to the positions portrayed in this article; in practice most are more nuanced.

is widely accepted (Stoker et al. 2011). Hence, all individuals partaking in decisions about politics – defined as “*who gets what, when, and how*” – can be regarded as citizens.⁴ Arguably, such political decisions range much broader than legislation, and for instance also include protests, debates, and deliberations. Additionally, inclusion in these political communities does not necessarily take the shape of formalized citizenship of a sovereign state. Although citizenship has come to be associated with ‘paper’ requirements such as passports, voting passes, and identification cards, these formalizations are not *inherent* to citizenship.⁵ Even in cases when individuals’ citizenship was fully formalized, they were not always incorporated in the political community.

To illustrate this point, the example of African Americans in America’s Deep-Southern states may be useful: roughly from the end of Reconstruction (1877) to the Civil Rights Movement (1954–68). After the Civil War (1861-65) and long Congressional strife, black people were formally enfranchised with the Fifteenth Amendment of 1870. They now had the formal right to vote and hold office. The Amendment states that “the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude”.⁶ However, after a few ‘good years’ in which informal and formal citizenship coincided, black Americans were informally kept from casting their ballot and relying on legal protection in a manner equal to white Americans. This situation existed for almost a century, roughly until the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Woodward 2001; Hall 2005; Foner 1990). In all these years, informal reality was not in line with formal rules, so that those who were full citizens on paper were not members of the political community in practice.

Although the case of black Americans is a ghastly example of the fact that informal and formal citizenship do not always overlap completely, it must be emphasized that formal inclusion can have very positive effects for those enfranchised. In his famous essay on British citizenship, the sociologist T. H. Marshall exemplifies how formal citizenship has empowered the English working class. As Marshall explains, citizenship has counterbalanced the excesses of capitalism in 19th century England. Through exercising the political rights that come with national citizenship, the English working class was able to combat its domineered position (Marshall 1950). Marshall describes how formal democratic citizenship has been used by the English poor to found the welfare state, which in turn has arguably provided the most important mechanism for overcoming the domination by capital over labor (Esping-Andersen 2013). This is not the place to dig deeply

⁴ Just what is *political* seems to have become an academic discipline in itself, see (Hay 2007). In this article, politics is defined along the lines of Harold Lasswell, as “who gets what when and how” (Lasswell 1950). As such, politics can be both formal (in parliament, a cabinet, or an election), or informal (in protests, deliberations, and debates).

⁵ After its inception in the early Greek city-states, citizenship evolved into a right to equal protection under the law in the Roman empire (Pocock 1996, 36). Later, it came to denote a certain respectability in the Middle Ages and loyalty to a city-state in the Renaissance period. In all these instances, citizenship did not have its modern formalization.

⁶ Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. For a full text, see <https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxv>.

into Marshall's essay, however it is important to distill the emancipatory function that formal citizenship can have.⁷ Formal national citizenship provides clarity: within the formal national framework, all citizens have the same *right to power*. Utilizing this right to power, a state's citizens can demand a fair(er) piece of the pie. Formal citizenship can be a great equalizer, but, as David Miller emphasizes, all depends on the degree to which informal and formal inclusion coincide:

Equal citizenship means that every adult member of the political community must enjoy equal rights and responsibilities which together make up the single status of citizen. This is a one-class status – when we talk about people as second-class citizens, we do so in order to draw attention to the fact that something has gone wrong, that our institutions are not performing in the way that they should: no one can legitimately be a second-class citizen (Miller 2008, 375).

For Miller and other statist republicans, citizenship is a *formal and equal status, giving individuals a right to power as participants in the exercise of popular sovereignty*. Its ideal is that every state is run by such a collective of citizens, ruling their territory as equal partners. This ideal provides what Mark Purcell calls a “powerful geopolitical narrative”. It conveys the idea that “the world is divided up into national-scale sovereign units, each the ultimate authority within its territory” (Purcell 2003, 570). It is against this – sometimes only implied – narrative that cosmopolitans have launched their main criticisms.

COSMOPOLITAN CRITIQUES AND PROPOSALS

According to cosmopolitans, statist republicans unjustly pursue equality for their “own” citizens while denying it to non-citizens (Balibar 2009, 35). Typically, cosmopolitans criticize practices as maintaining tax walls, harsh requirements for entry of immigrants, and denying foreigners to enjoy the privileges that national citizens have, as they hold such practices to limit the abstract cosmopolitan goal of *global fairness*. Cosmopolitans argue that, through its harsh distinction between citizens and non-citizens, statism creates precisely the type of second-classness which statist republicans have rightly called unjust in a domestic setting. As transnational justice scholar Thomas Pogge argues: “nationality is just one further deep contingency (like genetic endowment, race, gender, and social class), one more potential basis of institutional inequalities that are inescapable and present from birth” (1989, 247). With Pogge, cosmopolitans contend that the “institutional inequalities” caused by nationality are not unsurpassable. Especially now commerce and communication have globalised, a global community can overcome this bias. As sociologist Saskia Sassen has argued, the linkage between states and citizenship is already breaking due to

⁷ A good critique of Marshall's essay has been written by Bryan Turner (Turner 1997).

the effects of globalization (Sassen 2002a).⁸ In recent decades the cosmopolitan ideal has chiefly attracted educated and wealthy supporters from Europe and North America, arguably the people who can afford to travel and trade throughout the world. Yet, the idea of cosmopolitanism has a long history of its own, reaching far beyond the times of Skype-meetings, Erasmus Scholarships, and Big Macs.⁹ The Dutch political theorist Sebastiaan Tijsterman argues that, at least since the time of the ancient Greeks, cosmopolitan ideals criticized those of state-citizenship; “drawing attention to the moral shortcomings resulting from the exclusiveness that defines territorial citizenship” (Tijsterman 2014, 1). It was reputedly Diogenes the Cynic (412 BCE - 323 BCE) who first said “I am a citizen of the world (kosmopolitês)” (Nussbaum 1994, 3). Ever since Diogenes, cosmopolitans had in common their protest against the narrow boundaries of national citizenship. However, their ‘solutions’ have always varied greatly. Also in the current debate on citizenship, three different types of cosmopolitan propositions can be found. After I present these types, I will argue that their conceptualization limits our understanding of unformalized world citizenship.

The first group of cosmopolitans propagated a world government. In this scenario, popular sovereignty would be shared equally by all humans, and the whole world would become something like a super-state. Voting rights, tax-systems, and passports: all would be organized at the global level. This type of cosmopolitans generally see a proto-world government taking shape already, with an increasingly activist U.N. and persuasive human rights institutions (Sassen 2002b, 288; Joachim and Locher 2008). Interestingly, world government cosmopolitans have the same conception of citizenship as statist republican authors have, despite the notable difference between the global and the national scale (Lu 2008). World government cosmopolitans use the same conceptual framework, of a formal status giving individuals a right to participate in popular sovereignty. Yet, most authors convincingly argue that the current state of international relations does not seem to allow “a quantum leap from the sovereign state level to the world level” for the foreseeable future (Faist 2001). As the sceptic international relations scholar Stephan Krasner argues, “world government is [...] infeasible as a solution to global problems because of the unsurpassable difficulties of establishing authoritative hierarchies at the global or international level” (Krasner 1999, 42).

The second cosmopolitan position argues for multi-level citizenship. Multi-level cosmopolitans contend that the state should be “another level of appeal, and not the sole and final one” (Tan 2000, 101). Multi-level cosmopolitanism argues for the dispersion of sovereignty, providing “some central organs of world government” but allowing national communities to maintain

⁸ This article does not allow for the time to expand on the notion of globalization, see Hirst’s “Globalization in Question” (Hirst, Thompson, and Bromley 2015).

⁹ As McDonald’s hamburgers are more or less uniform throughout the world, economists have proposed a Big Mac Index to compare Purchase Power Parity (PPP) in different states (Ong 1997).

sovereignty on other issues (Pogge 1989, 285). These authors hold that citizenship could play a role on various levels, with citizens being part of multiple concentric constituencies. They point out that, in a sense, this is already the case in large parts of Europe, where one votes as part of a municipal, provincial/departmental, state, and a European constituency (Painter 2002). Yet, despite this practice, multi-level cosmopolitanism has received the strongest critiques from statist republicanism. Statist republicans oppose the notion of multi-level citizenship on the grounds that it would require the conceptually impossible splitting of sovereignty. In their rigid definition of sovereignty as all-powerfulness, sovereignty and citizenship cannot be divided. Not all these layers can be all-powerful, as only one entity can be sovereign over a certain territory (Philpott 2001). According to these authors, citizenship loses its meaning when it is divorced from territoriality, sovereignty and shared nationality (Linklater 2002, 23–24).

The third type of cosmopolitanism is known as statist cosmopolitanism. As international relations cosmopolitan Steven Slaughter states “cosmopolitanism would be satisfied with the elaboration of human rights and democracy in states across the world” (Slaughter 2007, 89). This position tries to evade the sovereignty argument, by holding that the national community can remain sovereign, yet it argues that the cosmopolitan ideals should be pursued with national means. In this conception, the nation-state would be a vehicle for cosmopolitanism (Held 2011; Miller 2011; Slaughter 2007; Ypi 2008). Statist cosmopolitans contend that while national republican citizenship is in contradiction with multiple citizenships, the contrast with statist cosmopolitanism is far less problematic (Slaughter 2007, 93). Imagine that the citizens of a given state would *en masse* decide to distribute an enormous amount of wealth to the global poor. This, according to statist cosmopolitans, would be a form of cosmopolitan citizenship (Dower 2000, 560–61). The 0.7% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that OESO countries have to contribute to development aid can be seen as a beginning-point of such statist cosmopolitanism. Yet, while the statist cosmopolitan position seems to solve the problem of integrating cosmopolitanism with statism, it arguably conceals acts of world citizenship bearing no relation to formal citizenship with a right to popular sovereignty. Statist cosmopolitanism fails to show how individuals can have political power as world citizens. As such, it limits some of the inequalities caused by one’s state of birth, but it does not show how citizens can be members of a worldwide political community.

In essence, all three cosmopolitan solutions start their analyses from the perspective of statist citizenship and popular sovereignty. The world government proposal transfers popular sovereignty from the national to the global level; multi-level citizenship builds on national citizenship and adds additional levels to it; and statist cosmopolitanism basically leaves national citizenship intact, but argues that it should be used to pursue global aims. Arguably, this statist

perspective is not necessary to citizenship. The definition of citizenship – membership of a political community – also allows for less formalized types of citizenship. Arguably, the cosmopolitan aim of countering the inequalities caused by statism could also be achieved with an informal type of citizenship. For cosmopolitans, the proposed types of citizenship are (only) instruments, with which they hope to achieve their goal of global fairness. By staying within the formalized framework of statism, an important cosmopolitan tool tends to be overlooked: the fact that *informal* world citizenship can also help to achieve the goal of global fairness.

THREE EXAMPLES OF INFORMAL GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Arguably, statisticians are too fast to reject global citizenship. Though not formalized, world citizenship already exists in practice. Many people feel part of a political community of ‘all humans’, and act accordingly (Kaldor et al. 2003; Castells 2008). In this paragraph, three examples of performing world citizenship will be provided. These cases illustrate that individuals can have informal power outside of the formalized statist republican power structures. Contrasting with the statist republicans’ focus on popular sovereignty, there is a large and compelling body of scholarly literature suggesting that there is more to power structures than the effectuation of popular sovereignty. As Young interprets it: power is located as diffusely as “humane practices of education, bureaucratic administration, production and distribution of consumer goods, medicine and so on” (Young 2009, 56). Feminist scholar Judith Butler explains how forms of linguistic address as ‘girl’, ‘delinquent’ and ‘sinner’ also exercise power; enabling and foreclosing agency (Butler 1997, 18). Girls supposedly cannot do something that is meant for boys; delinquents are considered untrustworthy; and sinners are in a disadvantage when dealing with puritans. These linguistic matters can hardly be changed with the powers of formal citizenship. The type of citizenship that *can* alter these practices has little to do with sovereignty and laws, and can be found outside the nation-state as well as in it. In the cases of world citizenship discussed below, the political situation has been altered without using the formal statist republican mechanisms of voting and legislating.

The case of the *sans papiers* (literally: without papers) illustrates how non-national citizenship can be performed in an attempt to alter discursive practice (Balibar 2000). Although people without passports are regularly referred to as illegals, the *sans papiers* insisted on being called “paperless” instead. “Illegals” would imply that they were not supposed to be in France, that they were somehow engaged in criminal and punishable behavior. On 18 March 1996, 324 migrants without passports occupied a church in Paris, calling themselves the “sans-papiers”. As Anne Mc Nevin states, “this initial action prompted collectives of sans- papiers to organize across the country and was followed by further church occupations, hunger strikes, demonstrations and

petitions” (McNevin 2006, 135). The deportation of leading protesting *sans papiers* did not prevent the spread of the movement throughout the country (Krause 2008, 341). *Sans papiers* kept demanding to be treated the same as French citizens, contending that since a passport is only a piece of paper, exclusion on the basis of lacking one is illegitimate. The *sans papiers* argued that they were part of the “human community”, and that as such they were endowed with basic human rights which should be upheld across the rigid demarcations of political communities (McNevin 2006, 138-41). Étienne Balibar interprets the effect of their protest as follows: “they have given political activity the transnational dimension which we so greatly require in order to open up perspectives of social transformation and of civility in the era of globalization” (Balibar 2000, 43). While most people still refer to them as illegals, the *sans papiers* have succeeded in mobilizing support from parts of the broader public (Krause 2008, 345). One of the notable results has been that the news agency Associated Press (AP) has decided to stop referring to the *sans papiers* as “illegal immigrants” (Colford 2013). Another has been a ruling of the French constitutional court, emphasizing that “foreigners are not French but they are human beings”, thereby expressing agreement with the *sans papiers*’ cosmopolitan claims (Soysal 1998, 203). Although not completely successful, the *sans papiers* have succeeded in challenging their discrimination by the state, thus enhancing their legal position.

Informal power is also located in economic relations, domestically as well as internationally (Gilpin 1987). In the contemporary globalized and internationalized economy, it is increasingly difficult for individual states to challenge existing economic configurations (Schwartz 2009). The Occupy movement (2011) provides an example of informal world citizenship criticizing such informal power relations. Although Occupy was a notoriously decentralized movement (there were supposedly no leaders and no hierarchies), it was a global movement (Hosseini 2013). The Occupy protests spread over 1500 cities throughout the world, its political critique being on the unfair distribution of wealth in the world. As an analyst comments: “the Occupy movement, as it has come to be called, named the source of the crises of our time: Wall Street banks, big corporations, and others among the 1% are claiming the world’s wealth for themselves at the expense of the 99% and having their way with our governments” (Van Gelder 2011, 1). Hence, Occupy can be conceived as a world movement trying to help national citizenries regain control over their respective states. Although states are accepted as crucial vehicles of power in this perspective, formal citizenship is not regarded as the appropriate tool to get a grip on them. As the Iranian author Hamed Hosseini emphasizes, Occupy was a global protest against what was often been called a neo-liberal ideology (Hamed Hosseini 2013).¹⁰ Although Occupy influenced many discussions in states’ legislatures, its power was not based on formal national citizenship but on its claim to represent “the 99%” of the world community.

¹⁰ For more on the contested meaning of neo-liberalism, see British anthropologist David Harvey’s “Brief History” (2005).

A third example of informal world citizenship is the protesting against nuclear weapons, mostly in the Seventies and Eighties (Beek 2013). The sheer destruction that atomic bombs could cause became painfully apparent after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Since these bombings, protests against nuclear weaponry have varied in intensity. The protesters tried to influence the global superpowers to get rid of their entire nuclear arsenal, using other means than merely the formal parliamentary structures (Wittner 1993b). They tried to create awareness of the possibilities for mutual assured destruction (MAD) in a nuclear war. As their own states often did not bear nuclear arms, directing them could not solve the problem that nuclear weapons posed. Due to the protesters, the international security situation was discussed globally. The real alternatives in global security issues, the “peace movement” repeatedly insisted, were either “one world or none” (Wittner 1993a). Although the global superpowers have deterred one another from striking with nuclear weaponry so far, this need not mean that the international security situation was (and is) perceived as safe. As Martin Amis has written in 1987, the problem with nuclear deterrence is that “it can’t last out the necessary timespan, which is roughly between now and the death of the sun” (Amis 1988). Currently, we have not yet reached one of either the “one” or “none” world scenarios. Yet, global protests have exercised informal power and contributed to a political climate in which non-proliferation agreements such as the SALT II (1979), START (1991), and NPT (1995) treaties could be established (Van den Berghe 2003, 372).

INTERPRETATION

The perspective of informal world citizenship allows one to see the performances of citizenship that are not limited by national boundaries. Although arguably none of these cases has been entirely successful, they have altered “who gets what, when, and how”. The *sans papiers* have challenged how they were dealt with, by criticizing informal practices of language that were hard (or impossible) to challenge with the formal power mechanisms of statist citizenship. The case of Occupy has illustrated how informal world citizenship can be used to help national citizenries regain control over their territories. The last example, of protests against nuclear weapons, depicts world citizenship as an attempt to alter a practice – the place of nuclear weapons within military arsenals – over which sovereign national governments often have no control. Here, informal world citizenship is utilized to influence the very few states that do possess nuclear weapons.¹¹ Although Martin Amis has ironically argued that we are only safe after “the death of the sun”, nuclear disarmament protests have arguably enhanced global safety by contributing to non-proliferation agreements. Combined, the three examples illustrate how global citizens can

¹¹ America, Russia, Britain, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and probably Israel possess nuclear weapons (Hoff 2008, 286; Cohen 1998; Lewis and Xue 1991; Wittner 2009).

exercise informal political power to combat perceived injustices that cannot be altered with popular sovereignty alone.

To be clear, the aim of these examples is not to discredit formal citizenship. Arguably, the perspective of formal citizenship has a lot to it: it is simple, convincing, and its formalized democratic structure offers individuals a concrete right to power. It must be admitted that in all examples of informal world citizenship, states were recognized as crucial vehicles of power. It was, for instance, the French government ruling that the *sans papiers* should be treated more humanely; just as it were the *states* bearing nuclear weapons that would ultimately have to lay them down. However, it were global movements – not formal and national ones – through which citizens voiced their claims. Although the perspective of formal citizenship is important, it does not take informal political acts into account.¹² By applying the perspective of informal world citizenship, I tried in this article to incorporate such informal acts in a conception of citizenship.

Although it is speculative, it is important to recognize that informal world citizenship is likely to become more influential in the coming decades. As two eminent authors on citizenship, Engyn Isin and Bryan Turner, argue:

[The expansion of citizenship] happens not because there is an identical polity that exists at another scale but because struggles for redistribution and recognition expand beyond and across borders. Such expansion occurs primarily because of mobility not only of people but also ideas, images, products, values and concerns across borders. Over the last several decades, with the development and deployment of telecommunications, media and transportation technologies there has been an intensification of social relations – both affinities and hostilities – across borders (Isin and Turner 2007, 14).

In the end, statist republicans may very well discard informal world citizenship, as it does not offer the previously discussed right to power. For cosmopolitans however, the notion offers a new conceptual tool with which attempts to challenge global inequalities can be understood more readily. With the globalization of communication, economy, and travel, the informal political acts that informal world citizenship emphasizes could very well become even more relevant in the future (Braman and Sreberny 1996; Nash 2009; Sassen 1999). Although the nation-state will be the most important vehicle of power for the foreseeable future, it will be useful to have a flexible concept like informal world citizenship in years to come.

¹² For instance through protests, deliberations, and debates, these informal power structures also play at the statist level. For an overview, see (Offe 1987).

CONCLUSION

In recent decades, statist republicans and cosmopolitans have debated one another fiercely. Statist republicans hold that citizenship can only exist at the national level, when it has a direct connection with popular sovereignty. Cosmopolitans, on the other hand, claim that the existence of states is an important cause of global inequality. Although their moral statements are convincing to most political theorists, their solutions are not. The proposition to transfer popular sovereignty to the global level and create a world government has been regarded as unviable and undesirable. The same can be said about plans to create multi-level citizenship, with popular sovereignty on multiple levels (municipal, provincial, state, continental, world). According to critics, multi-level citizenship is a *contradictio in terminis*, as sovereignty is per definition undividable. A last cosmopolitan suggestion has received better critiques. This idea of statist cosmopolitanism accepts that sovereignty rests at the national level, but proposes that these national means should be used to pursue global ends. Although statist cosmopolitanism may be a reasonably convincing suggestion, it essentially leaves the citizenship at the national level. Arguably, all three cosmopolitan perspectives limit the extent to which informal global politics can be perceived, as they stay within the framework of formal citizenship. In this article I have coined the notion of informal global citizenship, in an attempt to illustrate the extent to which global citizenship is already put in practice. As the cases of the *sans papiers*, the Occupy movement, and nuclear protests have shown, informal world citizens can exercise political power, although they bear no relation to conventional popular sovereignty. Being unable to convince statist republicans to shift sovereignty to the global level, cosmopolitans could benefit from taking a closer look at informal power mechanisms. Informal world citizenship already exists, and can help cosmopolitans challenge the perceived injustices of statism.

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