

Cultural citizenship

The concept of 'cultural citizenship' emerged recently to describe a form of citizenship associated with multicultural societies, comprising a cultural community that regards itself as the majority, and minority cultural communities. The term has been used to describe the right of the minority or marginalised cultural community to be different without revoking their rights of belonging to that society (Rosaldo, 1994). This definition is based around the demands of a particular cultural group, deemed marginalised or disadvantaged based on a number of factors including their culture, to all the entitlements that full citizenship offers. While such a definition has been useful to foreground the rights of marginalised groups, it can be criticised for being too restrictive or instrumental, or for promoting too restrictive a view of culture. Moreover, this definition of cultural citizenship privileges how that particular group defines their difference from the dominant culture.

In another conception, cultural citizenship is defined as 'cultural practices and beliefs produced out of negotiating the often ambivalent and contested relations with the state and its hegemonic forms that establish criteria of belonging, within a national population or territory. Cultural citizenship, then, is both about 'self-making' - what an individual or community believe themselves to be - and 'being made' by the state - what kind of citizen the state wants or tries to construct of a person or community.' (Ong et al. 1996). Within this view of cultural citizenship, Cultural Heritage is central, defining what aspect of a person's or community's heritage is deemed important or acceptable both by the community itself and by the state to ensure all the rights of full citizenship.

Sources:

Rosaldo, R. (1994) Cultural Citizenship in San Jose, California. *PoLAR: Political and legal anthropology review* 17.2 (1994): 57-64.

Ong, A. et al. (1996) Cultural citizenship as subject-making: immigrants negotiate racial and cultural boundaries in the United States [and comments and reply]. *Current anthropology* (1996): 737-762.