

Neo-liberal Citizenship¹

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The government of populations within states and the government of states themselves within the international arena are intimately connected. Thus, in order to understand the character of citizenship in the modern world, it is necessary to locate it as part of a supra-national governmental regime in which the system of states, international agencies and multinational corporations play a fundamental role. A brief history of the modern system of states is followed first by an account of liberalism as a project of government emerging within that system, and secondly by an examination of how twentieth-century changes in the system of states have impacted on that liberal project. Where the liberal government of non-Western populations was once predicated on a denial of citizenship it is now channelled through the promotion of citizenship in states that are themselves increasingly subject to the rigours of the market.

There are many influences affecting the character of citizenship in the world today, but among the most pervasive of these are the activities of international development agencies and financial institutions in promoting 'good governance', a practice which is usually associated with a package of political and economic reforms, including the implementation of democracy and basic human rights. Since the latter have significant implications for citizenship and citizenship is widely regarded as a good thing, it may be tempting to see the work of these agencies as being, at least in this respect, a positive force for good.

Critics of these agencies usually present their activities in a very different light. Walden Bello, for example, makes a powerful case for the view that their work really amounts to a form of colonisation—to a recolonisation in many cases—of much of the non-Western world (Bello, 1994). The argument is an important one and the fundamental perception on which it is based is one that would be difficult to dispute. I argue in this paper, however, that to describe what is involved here as a form of colonisation is to misunderstand precisely what is most distinctive about the universalism of this recent promotion of citizenship and representative government: namely, that where the liberal government of non-Western populations was once predicated on a denial

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of citizenship, contemporary liberal attempts to govern the people of the non-Western world are increasingly channelled through citizenship itself.² To make this case, I begin by calling into question aspects of the conventional celebration of citizenship and then proceed to place the reforms promoted by the World Bank, IMF, OECD and other supra-national agencies within a broader governmental and historical context. They may not be the only significant forces affecting the character of citizenship in the modern world, but the importance of these agencies is undeniable.

The conventional celebration of citizenship usually starts from something like Aristotle's account of what it means to be a citizen:

He who has the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of any state is said by us to be a citizen of the state; and, speaking generally, a state is a body of citizens sufficing for the purposes of life. (1988, 1275b, pp. 19–22)

Citizenship may no longer be seen as the exclusively male preserve suggested by Aristotle's definition and most states now consist of more than a single city, but citizenship is otherwise generally regarded as involving the two components which he identifies. It is seen first as an attribute of individuals and secondly as deriving from their membership of a very particular kind of self-contained political unity—a state whose citizens participate in its government, if only by voting or choosing not to vote in elections, and which suffices 'for the purposes of [the citizens'] life'. Citizens are individuals who have certain rights, and a corresponding set of obligations, in relation to the government of the state to which they belong. Each of them would normally be expected to possess the personal attributes and characteristics (a minimal degree of rationality, courage, moral integrity, linguistic and cultural skills, and so on) required for the practical realisation of those rights and obligations in the context of the particular state in question. There are many self-contained political unities which are not states of this kind and, while they may well be in possession of various rights and obligations, the individuals who belong to them are not *citizens* either in Aristotle's or the predominant modern sense of that term. Even in political unities that do take the form of a body of citizens, there are likely to be some individuals who are not themselves citizens.

On this conventional view, citizenship is something that appears in certain kinds of state and, where it does appear, many individuals who belong to that state will be citizens while others, who might also belong to the state in some sense, will not. In either case, whether we are talking about the characteristics of states or of the human individuals who belong to them, the invocation of citizenship commonly brings with it a number of explicit or implicit normative rankings. In the case of states, for example, those in which there are citizens are generally regarded as superior to those in which there are no citizens, while people with states are seen as more advanced than people without states. The modern version of this view is that citizenship is most fully developed in Western democracies, and that these states are more advanced—not just more prosperous but also more civilised—than self-contained political unities of other kinds. Corresponding to this ranking of states and other political unities is a

ranking of the individuals who belong to them: individuals who are citizens of Western democratic states are often thought to be more civilised than those who belong to states in which citizenship is less fully developed,³ and individuals who belong to states are seen as being more civilised than tribal peoples who inhabit political unities of other kinds. As for individuals who live within a particular state, it is usually better to be a citizen of that state than not and, amongst those who are citizens, the relevant attributes, rights and obligations may be possessed more completely in some cases than in others. This last perception, that citizenship may be present in a state without yet being fully developed among its inhabitants, is the foundation of the modern sociological theory of citizenship, and especially of its relationship to social policy (Turner, 1993; Turner and Hamilton, 1994; van Steenbergen, 1994).

The various normative judgements associated with the discourse of citizenship all rest on a positive evaluation of one particular way of life, and a correspondingly negative evaluation of the many ways of life that depart, in one way or another, from its central organising principles. This is one important aspect of the discourse of citizenship that we might want to question. Aristotle articulated a common Greek view when he insisted that the Greek *polis*, the state as a body of citizens, was the highest of all forms of community, and the Romans clearly took a similar view of the superiority of their own peculiar arrangements. In itself, this belief in the superiority of one's own way of life does not distinguish the Greeks and Romans from many other peoples. It is worth noting here only because romanticised images of the Greek *polis* and the Roman *res publica* have haunted Western social and political thought throughout the modern period, and they have seriously infected modern conceptions of people, state and nation. While it would be dangerously anachronistic to describe Greek and Roman thinkers as suffering from what we now call ethnocentrism, it is clear that their accounts of what it means to be a citizen cannot be seen as an unproblematic starting point for our own discussions of the issue—and neither can their judgements concerning the ways of life of their non-citizen neighbours (Hartog, 1988). The extent to which modern understandings of citizenship, and indeed of politics more generally, reflect the prejudices of cultivated Greeks and Romans is an issue that few commentators—Isin (2002) being a notable exception—have yet begun to explore.

The normative trappings of the discourse of citizenship have a number of disturbing practical and analytical consequences, especially in relation to refugees and other migrants, but my aim in this paper is to address a different set of problems with the state-centred view of citizenship outlined above. Anthony Pagden notes that while the discourse of 'good governance' is most commonly associated with development in post-colonial states it should also be seen as 'part of an attempt to find a new way of characterising international relations which would involve not only states, but also non-statal and avowedly non-political bodies, particularly the international financial agencies and multinational corporations' (1998, p. 7). In fact, these two levels—government within states and the government of states themselves within the international arena—are intimately connected. Accordingly, I begin by suggesting that, in order to understand the character of citizenship in the modern world, it is necessary to

locate it as part of a supra-national governmental regime in which the system of states, international agencies and multinational corporations play a fundamental role. This leads on first to a brief history of the modern system of states, second to an account of liberalism as a project of government emerging within that system, and finally to an examination of how twentieth-century changes in the system of states have impacted on that liberal project. This last discussion brings us back to the condition of neo-liberal citizenship.

Citizenship in the System of States

If citizenship is a matter of relations between individuals and the state to which they belong—that is, of relations that are internal to the state in question—it is also one of the markers used by states in their attempts to regulate the movement of people across borders. In this respect, citizenship functions as one component of a broader regime of population management (Hindess, 2000a,b): a regime which operates first by dividing humanity into discrete sub-populations, each consisting of the citizens of some particular state, and secondly, by assigning to each state not only the right but also the obligation to manage its own internal affairs (including, of course, the regulation of entry and exit). Perhaps the most disturbing effect of the first element here, the division of humanity into the populations of particular states, is that each state is expected to look after its own citizens and to be correspondingly less concerned about the condition of those who appear to belong elsewhere. Thus, while the UN Declaration of Human Rights may describe itself as ‘universal’ in scope, it is careful to place responsibility for the realisation of the rights it invokes on the state to which the individual in question belongs, leaving all other states with only limited responsibilities in this respect. As for the second element, concerning a state’s management of its own internal affairs, states that fail to satisfy their obligations to the community of states are often seen as posing a threat to other states and therefore as being legitimate objects of outside intervention.

To understand the role of citizenship within this supra-national regime of government, it is useful to begin with a brief history of the modern states system. There have, of course, been other systems of states, not only in Western classical antiquity but also, for example, in China, South Asia and the Malay Archipelago, but these have not survived into the modern period. What has survived is a system of states that started life in seventeenth-century Europe, primarily as a result of attempts to bring destructive religious conflict under some kind of control. The 1648 Treaty of Westphalia and other agreements that ended the Thirty Years War are conventionally taken to mark the emergence of a new European order of independent sovereign states. While acknowledging the problems posed by the presence of powerful religious differences between Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists within territorial units, the Treaty nevertheless granted supreme political authority to territorial rulers within their domains, effectively leaving it to rulers and their subjects to reach some accommodation in matters of religion. The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state serves as part of this regime of pacification by restricting the rights of supporters of one religion from intervening in the religious affairs of

other participating states. In this case, political arrangements designed to pacify warring populations had the novel effect of transforming a condition in which populations were subject to a variety of overlapping and conflicting sources of authority into one in which rulers were acknowledged as having the primary responsibility for the government of the populations within their territories.⁴

Three features of the system established by the Westphalian agreements are particularly important for our understanding of later developments. First, the sovereignty of a state is a function of its recognition as a state by other members of the system of states.⁵ In this respect, the rights of states to manage their own affairs have always been heavily qualified, as rights commonly are, by a corresponding set of responsibilities—in this case to the ‘international community’, that is, to the overarching system of states to which they belong. The significance of this point can be seen if we contrast this view of sovereignty as an artefact of the states system, with the view promoted by the contractarian political theory set out, in rather different forms, by Hobbes (1968), Locke (1988), Rousseau (1968) and other early modern political theorists and more recently, for example, by John Rawls (1972, 1993). In the contractarian view, states are to be treated as if they had arisen out of formal or informal agreements amongst numerous individuals, who in turn became subjects of the states resulting from those agreements. This perspective suggests, of course, that sovereignty is essentially a matter of the internal relations between a state and its citizens on the one hand and of the capacity of a state to defend itself on the other. The order that is imposed by an overarching authority within a state is thus contrasted with the disorder, resulting from the absence of overarching authority, without.⁶ It is this view of the state as constituted by real or imaginary agreements amongst its citizens—that is, as ‘a body of citizens’ in Aristotle’s terms—which underlies the internalist account of citizenship sketched in my opening paragraphs.

Secondly, effective government within the member states of the Westphalian system is predicated on political conditions secured by the system itself—it depends, in other words, on conditions that operate above the level of the individual states themselves. In this case, the European system of states and the sovereignty which that system secured for its members allowed participating states a degree of freedom from outside interference without which it would hardly have been possible for Western states to practice and develop modern arts of government. The establishment of a system of states also provides conditions in which international systems of regulation could be further refined and developed.

Thirdly, the Westphalian states system is, at least in its early stages, specifically European, covering territories and populations in parts of Europe by means of treaties and understandings between participating states. Like other principles of public life, the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other participating states is honoured more in the breach than in the observance, operating as a set of prudential considerations serving to limit the spread of conflict. Even in this prudential form, however, it imposed few constraints on states’ interference in the affairs of those who inhabited territories not covered by these agreements and in which no truly sovereign states were

thought to exist (Schmitt, 1950). Thus, while states may have found their activities in parts of Europe restricted by Westphalia and other related treaties, they were not so restricted in other parts of the world. Indeed, they experienced little difficulty in deploying natural law and the Roman *jus gentium* to secure what they could regard as lawful grounds for territorial expansion elsewhere.⁷

This last feature of the European states system allows us to identify two fundamental stages in the spread of that system to other parts of the world. First, the effect of imperial acquisitions in other parts of the world was to bring new territories and populations into the remit of the Westphalian system (Strang, 1995). European imperial expansion, and the use by Western states of a discriminatory 'standard of civilisation' in their dealings with non-state entities and states (China, Japan, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Thailand, ...) that were not themselves accepted as part of the system of states (Gong, 1984), eventually resulted in the subordination of the greater part of humanity to direct or indirect rule by Western states. Modern imperialism was clearly a matter of subordinating substantial non-European populations to rule by European states, but it was at the same time a matter of incorporating those populations into the European states system. While most discussion of imperialism focuses on the first aspect the second is equally important: imperial domination was the form in which the European states system first became global in scope. It divided the world into several kinds of populations: citizens of Western states; non-citizen subjects of Western states; and various residual populations, consisting of the subjects of states that were independent but not fully accepted as part of the states system.

The culmination, in the early twentieth century, of this process of incorporating non-European populations into the European system of states was followed, more or less rapidly, by the second stage in the globalisation of the European states system. The widespread achievement or imposition of independence dismantled the first aspect of imperial rule while leaving the second firmly in place. To be an independent state is not to be subject to the rule of another state but, in the post-independence world, it is also to be a member of the states system and subject to the regulatory regimes which operate within that system. Thus, independence both expanded the membership of the system of states and set in place a radically new way of bringing non-Western populations under the rule of the states system (Seth, 2000). As a result, these populations found themselves governed both by modern states of their own and by the overarching system of states within which their own states had been incorporated. This is the point at which citizenship, of a kind, became a universal human condition.

To be an independent member of the system of states is not to be ruled directly by another state. But to make this point is not to say that members of the modern system of states engage with each other as equals: in this case, as with other regimes of government that operate with no controlling centre (the workings of an established market or of civil society, for example) some members are clearly more equal than others. Not only is the overarching system of states hierarchically structured, containing stronger and weaker states and more or less exclusive inner circles, but many of the recently established states are highly dependent on external assistance, having inherited poorly developed infrastructures and educational systems, state agencies and state practices de-

signed to serve a system of government by outsiders, et cetera. This condition leaves them open to kinds of external supervision that do not apply, or do not apply so strongly, to more established states. Moreover, while recognised as members of the international system of states they, like many states that have never been colonised, have yet to be admitted to its more exclusive inner circles and, as a result, are subject to updated versions of the European 'standard of civilisation'—which requires them to demonstrate their fitness to participate in various international arrangements (OECD, GATT and its successor, WTO, providing the most obvious examples) and which serves from time to time to legitimate intervention by other states—and to regulation by international financial agencies that are clearly dominated by Western interests.

There is little that is new in this last set of points, but they do provide an important background to our examination of liberalism as a regime of government developing within and operating over the modern states system.

Liberalism as a Governmental Project

Standard academic accounts of liberalism usually present it as a normative political doctrine or ideology organised around a commitment to individual liberty and, in particular, to protecting that liberty against the state. This view is not entirely false but, like the internalist view of citizenship with which I began this paper, it is seriously incomplete. We can begin our discussion of this issue by noting that, throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, many of those ruled by liberal states were subject peoples of European imperial possessions and that, for these peoples, liberal government was a kind of authoritarian rule—as it is now in the independent states of Central and South America⁸ and in parts of Asia. This observation suggests one important respect in which standard accounts of liberalism have to be corrected. The liberal ideal may be for the state to rule over, and to rule through, the free activities of autonomous individuals but liberals have traditionally taken the view that substantial parts of humanity do not, as a matter of fact, possess the minimal capacities for autonomous action that would enable them to be governed in this way (Hindess, 2001). That they have taken this view is a matter less of liberal hypocrisy, as some commentators have suggested (Guha, 1997; Said, 1992), than of liberal attempts to deal with a perceived reality which does not appear to satisfy the conditions required for the operation of their preferred form of liberal government.

Such apparent disjunctions between ideal and practical reality, in turn, suggest to liberal political reason both that the settings in which government takes place may be ranked in an hierarchical order and that many of these settings are in need of a corresponding project of reform. The hierarchical order is one in which some people, the more cultivated inhabitants of civilised states, are seen as being relatively close to the condition of individual autonomy while others are seen as being at a greater or lesser distance from that condition. The corresponding project of reform is that of the civilising mission of government, a project of gradually improving subject populations. While the civilising mission did not appear as a distinct budget item in imperial administration, it nevertheless served

as a major organising principle of imperial rule (see, for example, Conklin, 1997). Together with closely related imperial practices of divide and rule, it generated systematic patterns of discrimination between populations and sub-populations within them on the basis of what seemed to be their existing level of civilisation or 'improvement'.

Now, the shift noted earlier from direct imperial rule to independence left the liberal perception of a hierarchy of social arrangements more or less in place, but it radically transformed the conditions under which the corresponding liberal project of improvement could be pursued. However, before turning to the consequences of that change, we need to consider a second important respect in which standard accounts of liberalism must be corrected. I began this section by suggesting that standard academic accounts of liberalism present it as a normative political doctrine or ideology, but it can also be seen as a positive project of government—a project concerned not only with establishing normative criteria in terms of which the actions of states may be judged and sometimes found wanting, but also and more importantly, with addressing the practical problems involved in governing states and their populations. Indeed, although I cannot go into this issue here, it is tempting to suggest that the priority accorded to normative issues in academic accounts of liberalism reflect the twentieth-century emergence of political theory as an independent academic specialism, complete with its canon of historical texts and its own internal debates, and of liberal political theory as an influential position within these debates.

Liberalism, considered as a positive project of government, may not excite the interest of professional political theorists but it has had and continues to have enormous practical importance in the modern world. The productive character of liberalism as a project of government operating within states has been of particular concern to the 'governmentality' school of social analysis, whose work has resulted in many valuable explorations of the diverse ways in which individual choice and self-regulation have been deployed as instruments of liberal government.⁹ In fact, as some of my earlier remarks on the liberal perception of a hierarchy of social arrangements and of a corresponding desire to improve the condition of the less advanced (by force if necessary¹⁰) may have suggested, this focus on the liberal government of freedom offers an unduly restricted account of the productive capacities of liberal political reason. Nevertheless, without denying the importance of liberal authoritarianism, it is an aspect of the governmental use of liberty that I wish to focus on here.

Many observers have noted that the image of the market as an exemplary form of free interaction plays a fundamental role in liberal political thought, where it is seen as demonstrating how the activities of numerous individuals may be regulated and coordinated without direction from a single controlling centre. In this respect, the market is seen as a decentralised mechanism of government operating at two rather different levels. At the first and most immediate level, the perception is that individuals are governed, at least in part, by the reactions of others with whom they interact and that, at least among more civilised peoples, their interactions will normally take a peaceful form—the market itself providing the most obvious example. This view suggests that, while the promotion of suitable forms of free interaction may be an effective way of dealing with the

government of civilised populations, it is likely to be less successful in other cases. Secondly, over the longer term, interaction with others is thought to influence the internal standards which individuals use to regulate their own behaviour—by affecting, for example, their sense of good and bad conduct, of what is acceptable or unacceptable in particular contexts, and so on. At this level, market interaction itself is seen as a powerful instrument of civilisation, inculcating such virtues as prudence, diligence, punctuality, self-control, and so on (Hirschman, 1977; Holmes, 1995). This view suggests that, if only suitable forms of property can be set securely in place and non-market forms of economic activity reduced to a minimum, then market interaction itself may function as a means of improving the character of less civilised peoples. In this case, authoritarian state intervention to reform property relations and impose conditions that would enable widespread market interaction to take off may be seen as a liberal move towards a situation in which individuals may be governed through their free interactions.

The ideal image of the market, in effect, provides liberal political reason with a model of the governmental uses of freedom. In this spirit, for example, Foucault observes that the market plays ‘the role of a “test”, a locus of privileged experience where one can identify the effects of excessive governmentality’ (1997, p. 76). Foucault’s own account of liberalism and the governmentality accounts which have followed his lead have focused on the rationality of the government of the state—that is, on the government of state agencies and of the population and territory over which the state claims authority—and they have accordingly pitched their analysis of the governmental usage of markets at this level. However, as other commentators have argued, this liberal perception of the governmental utility of markets has been seen as relating as much to the conduct of states (and other organisations) as to the conduct of human individuals (Burchell and Linklater, 1996; Howard, 1978). International trade in goods and services, in other words, has been seen by liberals not only as a means of promoting the wealth of nations but also, and perhaps more importantly, as a means of regulating the conduct of states. The same applies, of course, to trade in financial instruments. It is well known that the freedom of action of national governments is often severely constrained by international financial markets, but it is not sufficiently recognised that these markets have been constructed, as a matter of deliberate policy, by a number of powerful states and supra-national agencies (Helleiner, 1994).

This last point brings us back to my earlier observation that liberalism should be seen as a governmental project which developed initially within the conditions provided by the European system of states. If the Westphalian system addressed the problem of pacifying warring populations by assigning those populations to the exclusive rule of discrete sovereign states, this did not entirely resolve and in some respects it exacerbated, the related problem of pacifying states and their rulers. Indeed, the problem of civilising states was a major concern of liberal political thought in the eighteenth century and it has since remained a central theme in liberal discussions of international order. It may, in fact, be misleading to follow mainstream political theory in regarding liberalism as concerned primarily with governing the particular populations of individual

states and thus to treat the liberal discussion of international order, if its presence is acknowledged at all, as a derivative, secondary development. Considered as a positive project of government, liberalism should rather be seen as concerned with the problem of governing the larger human population, a problem which it addresses at two levels: first, by incorporating humanity within the modern system of states, as the regimes of modern imperialism and post-colonial independence have each done in their own way; and secondly, by using market interactions and other devices to civilise and to regulate the conduct both of states themselves and of those within the particular populations under their authority.

Neo-liberal Citizenship

How does this sketch of the liberal project of government relate to the contemporary condition of citizenship? I began this paper by presenting what might be called an internalist view of citizenship, which sees it as a matter of the relationship between an individual and the state to which that individual belongs. Against this view, I argued that, in order to understand the character of citizenship in the modern world, it is necessary to locate it as part of a supra-national governmental regime in which the international system of states plays a fundamental role. I suggested, as part of this argument, that the sovereignty of states should be seen as an artefact of the system of states to which they belong and that it is therefore misleading to regard states as constituted essentially on the basis of formal or informal agreements among their citizens. The government of a state is never simply a matter of internal relations between the state and its own citizens or subjects.

There are, in other words, important structural or systemic limitations on the role of citizens in the government of contemporary states, however internally democratic they might appear to be. There are many other reasons for this condition too, of course. Indeed, the institutions of representative government—which provide the predominant modern understanding of democracy—are clearly designed to ensure that citizens play a strictly circumscribed role in the government of the state to which they belong (Hindess, 2000c). This is the substantive empirical foundation of the ‘realist’ theory of democracy, one of the most influential doctrines in twentieth-century political science.¹¹ Modern democracies, realism tells us, are governed by a combination of elected officials and professional state bureaucracies, and the people decide who is elected to rule them, not the substantive policies which their government is to pursue. The significance of this view for the liberal project of government lies in its suggestion that modern democracy brings together three different sources of political legitimacy:

- the charismatic element of leadership;
- participation in the appointment of elected officials which, as with other forms of participation, promotes among participants a sense of responsibility for the decisions that result, even if their influence on those decisions is actually very small; and

- the rationality of professional bureaucracy which ensures that state agencies are administered by suitably qualified personnel and their practices are governed by the relevant expertise.

The anticipated effects of this combination are nicely captured in Talcott Parsons' account of the evolutionary advantage, as he saw it, of democracy over other forms of government. What is most distinctive about democracy, he argues, is not so much the general sense of legitimacy which it promotes, since this feature can also be found in a number of other political regimes. Rather it is that democracy alone is most able to 'mediate consensus in [the exercise of power] by particular persons and groups, and in the formation of particular binding policy decisions' (1967, p. 516).

Democracy, on this view, secures a degree of legitimacy for the practical activities of the state and its various agencies which other regimes are simply unable to match, and it is this that particularly appeals to the development agencies and financial institutions involved in promoting 'good governance' in the developing world—as it does, of course, to those engaged in the government of Western states themselves. In both cases, it seems, democracy is the most effective means of ensuring that the people will 'own'¹², or at least that they not actively resist, the package of political and economic reforms which their governments are required to implement.

The fact that the behaviour of contemporary states is subject to significant external constraints is not in itself a cause for concern—quite the contrary, in fact. What should concern us, rather, is the grossly unequal character of the international order from which these constraints derive. Thus, while all contemporary states, even the most powerful, are subject to the general supervisory mechanisms of the enlarged system of states—to a variety of international conventions, treaties and a developing framework of international law on the one hand and the 'civilising' effects of international trade on the other—a clear majority of the new states that emerged from the twentieth-century end of empire, along with many non-Western states that had never been colonised, also found themselves subject to supervisory mechanisms of a different kind: those of the more specific international regime of development. Some of these states (with more than a little help from their friends) have played the development game with a notable degree of success while others have tried to play by radically different rules, usually with unhappy results, but most have fallen somewhere between these extremes.

The condition of citizenship in post-colonial states in particular is also seriously constrained by the governmental institutions and practices inherited from the colonial period, most of which were predicated on a view of the subject population as considerably less civilised than their rulers. In practice, of course, some such view of the subject population is held by the political/administrative class in all modern states but it was more pronounced, and more freely expressed, in the case of populations subject to modern imperial rule. Colonial rule by Western states involved a clear distinction between citizens and subjects and a systematic development of what eventually became known, in the case of Britain's African possessions, as indirect rule: that is, of a practice of govern-

ment which worked through institutions that relied on what were thought to be indigenous customs and structures of authority.¹³ Precisely because they were, at least in intention, based on indigenous practices, the detailed character of these ersatz governmental arrangements varied from one population to another. But their overall effect was to institutionalise a regime of what Mamdani (1996) has called ‘decentralised despotism’, a regime which promoted localised authoritarian rule within different sections of the population and reinforced, or even created, communal divisions. Thus, he argues, one of the most striking legacies of indirect rule in many post-colonial successor states is the presence of a set of governmental routines and practices that seriously undercut a common condition of citizenship.

We can see what is at issue here by developing my earlier observation that the modern sociological theory of citizenship rests on the perception that citizenship may be present in a state without yet being fully developed among its inhabitants. Starting from T.H. Marshall’s (1950) pioneering discussion of the development of citizenship in England, sociologists have routinely described modern citizenship as involving three sets of rights: the *civil* rights to liberty and equality before the law; the *political* right to vote and to participate in the political process; and the *social* right to participate fully in a way of life that is shared by the citizens as a whole. Marshall argued that the state had a responsibility to ensure that these rights are in fact secured for all citizens. A closely related claim informs the aspirations set out in the UN Declaration of Human Rights—which might, in fact, be regarded as a declaration in favour of a universal right to citizenship. The import of Mamdani’s argument, then, is that while independence displaces the colonial distinction between citizen and subject, the legacy of indirect rule nevertheless continues to subvert many of the civil and political rights of citizenship.

With regard to social rights in particular Marshall, followed by many social policy analysts, argued that the role of the state’s social policy was to ensure that citizens were not in fact excluded from participation in the life of their society by reason of poverty, ill-health or lack of education.¹⁴ While this sociological literature focuses on the prosperous (and predominantly Western) states of the OECD, it is worth noting here since its insistence on the role of the state in securing the social rights of citizenship serves to mark another significant difference between citizenship in the West and citizenship elsewhere. These social rights are comparatively well developed in most Western states, although they are now under considerable neo-liberal pressure, but in the majority of other states they have barely had a chance to develop.

Another imperial legacy is the liberal perception, noted earlier, of a hierarchy of social conditions and of a corresponding need for a civilising mission to bring about the improvement of the less advanced. But, although many of its practices have been adapted by post-colonial successor states, this is a mission that can no longer be pursued in its familiar imperial guise. Instead, the liberal project of improvement is now pursued by two very different parties, with both overlapping and competing visions of what it might involve. It is pursued first, as it was of course in the colonial period, by significant minorities in the ex-imperial domains themselves, many of whom are also concerned to reaffirm (and thus to

reinvent) elements of their own cultural heritage.¹⁵ Like Western colonial officials before them, members of such liberal minorities can be expected to combine a civilised distaste for the dirty work of governing their less advanced compatriots with a reluctant acknowledgement of its necessity. But, since they have also taken over governmental functions that would once have been performed by officers of the imperial state, they do so under radically different circumstances. On the one hand, because of their local connections, the rulers and public officials of the successor states tend to be seen, and perhaps to see each other, as more vulnerable to corruption even than Western officials had been during the colonial period.¹⁶ On the other, the positive affirmation of non-Western values provides them with a local, culturally specific variant of the patronising liberal view that the people of these domains cannot yet be trusted to govern themselves.

The liberal project of improvement is also pursued, rather more remotely, by Western states themselves working through a more distant set of indirect means. They operate, in effect, through national and international aid programmes that assist, advise and constrain the conduct of post-colonial states, through international financial institutions and also, of course, through that fundamental liberal instrument of civilisation, the market—including the internal markets of multinational corporations. In fact, the use of markets in regulating the conduct of states and in the conduct of government within them has become increasingly prominent as we move further away from the decolonisations of the mid-twentieth century. In liberal eyes, as noted earlier, the market appears to perform a variety of desirable functions: not only in promoting prosperity overall but also in regulating the conduct of states and fostering civilized attitudes and patterns of conduct among both their rulers and inhabitants.

Where it could once rely on the decentralised despotism of indirect rule over the subjects of Western imperial possessions, liberal political reason now has no alternative but to treat those who it sees as most in need of improvement as if they were in fact autonomous agents. The old imperial divisions between citizens, subjects and non-citizen others has been displaced by the post-imperial globalisation of citizenship, and indirect rule within imperial possessions has been superseded by an even less direct form of decentralised rule, in which the inhabitants of post-colonial successor states are governed through sovereign states of their own. This is not to suggest that this new form of indirect rule is likely to be any more successful than its imperial predecessors in imposing its will on target populations. My point, rather, is that this new form of indirect rule provides a global political context in which the promotion by international agencies of 'good governance' both within states and in the international arena has to be understood. Good governance within states is now seen as involving democracy—in the sense that the governments of states are expected to be minimally responsive to the wishes of their citizens and, as I noted earlier, the citizens in turn are expected to own, or at least to go along with, the policies of their government—and the implementation of basic human rights. But it is also seen as ensuring that the freedom of action of these governments, and therefore the ability of their citizens to determine what those actions will be, is severely constrained by both internal and international markets.

These last points bring us, finally, to the neo-liberal citizenship of my title. I noted earlier that the image of the market as a means of regulating and coordinating the activities of numerous actors without direction from a single controlling centre has always played a central role in liberal political thought. If there is a common thread linking the many late twentieth-century projects of neo-liberal reform, both within particular states and in the international arena, it lies in the attempt to introduce market and quasi-market arrangements into areas of social life which had hitherto been organised in other ways—the corporatisation and privatisation of state agencies, the promotion of competition and individual choice in health, education and other areas of what Marshall regarded as the proper sphere of social policy, the use of financial markets (and credit-rating agencies) to regulate the conduct of states, and so on. These developments have striking consequences for both the political and the social aspects of citizenship: the political rights (such as they are) may remain but their scope is restricted as market regulation takes over from direct regulation by state agencies and the judgement of the market is brought to bear on the conduct of states, while the social rights of citizenship (where they exist) are pared back as provision through the market replaces provision directly or indirectly through the state.

It seems, in fact, that the advance of citizenship in the post-colonial world is to be secured under neo-liberal political conditions. In practice, of course, such neo-liberal citizenship has become increasingly familiar to the populations of Western states in recent years, and there are interesting parallels between the collapse of social democracy in Western states and developments in post-colonial successor states (Low, 1996). Both have gone some way down the path of privatisation and corporatisation and both are subject to regulation by the international system of states, but the latter are subject also to the further rigours of the international development regime. At least with regard to the social rights of citizenship, then, we might say that the development of neo-liberal citizenship has advanced further in other parts of the world than it has in the West itself.

Notes

1. A much earlier version of this paper was presented at the 'Sovereign bodies: citizenship, community and the state in the post-colonial world' workshop, Sandjberg Manor, Denmark, December 2000. This final version has been written as part of a collaborative project (with Bruce Buchan and Christine Helliwell) supported by the Australian Research Council. I am grateful to many individuals for their criticism and advice, most especially to Brett Bowden, Bruce Buchan, Christine Helliwell, Engin Isin, Jane Kelsey, Robyn Lui and Sanjay Seth.
2. It is important not to exaggerate the extent of this development. The Western promotion of representative government in other parts of the world has always been tempered by other considerations. See Robinson (1996).
3. Cf. John Rawls' distinctions between 'reasonable liberal peoples', 'decent peoples' and various others (1999, p. 4).
4. There is an extensive literature on the emergence of the Westphalian system and its geo-political effects. See, for example, Schmitt (1950), Walker (1993), Spruyt (1994), Held (1995), and Hirst (1998).
5. Article 1 of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States insists that the 'state as a person of international law should possess the ... capacity to enter into relations with other states'.
6. Bull (1997) is the classic modern exposition of this contrast.

7. See Victoria (1995; and the discussion in Anghie, 1996) for influential early examples of such tendentious reasoning.
8. See the discussion of Colombian liberalism in Rojas (2002).
9. See especially Burchell et al. (1991), Barry et al. (1996), Dean and Hindess (1998), Dean (1999), and Rose (1999).
10. In a well known passage J.S. Mill argues that 'even personal slavery, by giving a commencement to industrial life, and enforcing it as an exclusive occupation of the most numerous portion of the community, may accelerate the transition to a better freedom than that of fighting and rapine' (Mill, 1977/1865, pp. 394–5). Mill's point is not so much to endorse the practice of slavery (to which he was in fact opposed) as to emphasise the magnitude of the task of improvement.
11. The classic statement is Schumpeter (1976). Sartori (1989) presents a forceful recent statement of the realist position.
12. The language of 'ownership' now plays an important part in development discourse. Joseph Stiglitz, then Vice-President of the World Bank, described the Bank's proposed Comprehensive Development Framework as involving 'a new set of relationships, not only between the Bank and the country, but within the country itself ... Central is the notion that the country (*not just the government*) must be in the driver's seat' (Stiglitz, 1999, pp. 22–3, emphasis added; see also Wolfensohn, 1999).
13. The most influential British statement of the case for indirect rule is Lugard (1923). However, the practice of working through what were believed to be indigenous institutions was a pervasive feature of Western imperial administration (Malinowski, 1929; Mamdani, 1996).
14. The impact of Marshall's analysis of citizenship is discussed in Bulmer and Rees (1996).
15. The formation of such liberal minorities was one of the intended effects of imperial rule but, as Bhabha (1994) observes, the mimicry which it involves invariably cuts both ways: while it serves the purposes of the colonial power in some respects it works against them in others. The affirmation of their own tradition—of Asian values, for example—by such minorities is also a kind of mimicry, and one that can be no less ambiguous in its effects.
16. Rose-Ackerman (1999) offers a particularly clear example of this perspective.

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