

The Indeterminate Subject: Urban Citizenship and the Aporias of Sovereignty

by

Angelique Rose Ahlstrom
B.A., University of Victoria, 2015

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the possibility of urban citizenship, focusing on the relation between the ‘urban’ and ‘citizenship’ as an expression of the problem of sovereignty. It highlights a key aspect that prevailing accounts fail to address, arguing that urban citizenship is characterized by twin logics of ‘urbanization’ and ‘citizenship’ that express conceptual binaries and transition narratives between nature/culture, rural/urban, space/time, and past/future from which there cannot be any fixed solution to the question of non-statist urban subjectivity. This is demonstrated in regenerations of the exclusionary inside/outside logic of sovereignty identified in theories of urban citizenship. Following Jacques Derrida in his concept of ‘aporia’, I undergo a close examination of these two processes, arguing that their conditions of possibility contain the impossibility of their unification and necessarily invoke sovereign politics for securing their distinctions, while simultaneously rendering them inherently unstable. An analysis of the aporetic logic of sovereignty underlying two terms reveals that, rather than seeking closure to the question of urban citizenship, engaging with the aporia can open up political possibilities and challenges for future theoretical and empirical work for politics.

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Introduction

“The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them.”

— Michel Foucault¹

§0.1: *Where are ‘We’?*

In sketching the imagination of modern political thought, one seldom locates its feats beyond the nation-state. Under the paradigmatic spell of state sovereignty, it is often forgotten that modern science, reason, self-ruling individuals and political belonging were not born in the state, but as creatures of the ancient labyrinth cities of Babylon, Alexandria, Rome and Athens. Normative assumptions thus suggest that there can only be nation-state citizenship. Global urbanization, however, is progressively hindering the democratic integrity of cities and adequacy of citizenship as a socio-legal mechanism for responding to emergent political phenomena, which range from the imminent threat of our planetary ecological crisis, to the daily practices of social and economic exclusions. On the view that our geological epoch, one of the ‘human’, the *Anthropocene*, has over 50% of the world’s population living in cities, it is claimed that our age is a distinctly *urban* one.² In response, the idea of an ‘urban citizenship’ has been formulated in a number of interesting and persuasive accounts as an alternative to state citizenship, whereby the city becomes a more promising domain for articulating and negotiating

¹ Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" ("Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?"), in P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, New York: Pantheon Books (1984): 32-50.

² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2016), *The World's Cities in 2016 – Data Booklet* (ST/ESA/SER.A/392); In counterpoint, see: Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid, "The ‘Urban Age’ in Question," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38.3 (2014): 731-755.

interests and desires. Yet, there is a general sense of disagreement on what this category actually entails. Attempts to move beyond the state by rethinking the city as a new terrain for citizenship are surprisingly disparate, often caught within a matrix of intricate and contradictory claims. The standard benchmark among these claims is that the urban can be a source for greater democratic legitimacy. Yet, what is striking in these accounts is a particular recurring pattern: the state continuously slips back into the frame.

This thesis seeks to answer a simple question: can citizenship ever exist outside the domain of the state without reproducing statist politics? If so, what might that look like? This thesis focuses on “urban citizenship” in order to investigate this; a focus that involves a theoretical inquiry into the hegemonic narratives of citizenship as a closed political community that have long functioned on logics of exclusion. This thesis is an attempt at problematizing our relation with this ‘ontology of the state,’³ in which we are not only citizens of modern nation states, but also occupants of a particular set of conditions (e.g. spatiotemporal, aesthetic, ethical), which have become the chosen standards by which we read and measure ourselves in relation to the world itself. What follows is an endeavor to reconstruct this ontology by magnifying other possibilities for engaging in politics from the perspective of a city. The purpose of this thesis, then, is to expose how much of our thinking, supposedly ‘post-modern’ in the year 2017, is caught

³ By ontology, I mean a pre-given way of existing and being in the world, and the domain in which we identify politics as occurring. The ontology I describe as the ideal of the state is synonymous with territorial sovereignty, typically conceived in legal terms. ‘Territory’, used in this sense, implies a delineated geographical unit ruled under exclusive authority or jurisdiction. This type of territorial rule is referred to as ‘state sovereignty’, a principle that is only legitimized by a system of sovereign states. In defining the state’s ontology, I follow R.B.J. Walker, who argues that, “[t]he principle of state sovereignty affirms the specifically modern conditions under which questions about security, democracy and responsibility can be answered.” R.B.J. Walker, “State Sovereignty and the Articulation of Political Space/Time,” *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 3 (1991): 460.

up in a very old story about who we are, and where we are going. Specifically, I want to examine what the possibility of urban citizenship separated from the state entails, showing how the very idea of solutions is often the very source of many of our contemporary problems. Thus, I attempt to deconstruct some of the narratives that have formulated the terms of relations between subjectivity and authority, nature and culture, us and them, space and time, and problematize the governing of those relations, the contouring of their dynamics in the making of the city. Thus, a central focus is to rethink our political subjectivities through the lens of a city in order to make sense of ongoing political struggles, without resorting to simple appeals for autonomous local self-government or a depoliticized⁴ notion of global community, and all with the aim of articulating some possible ways for responding to them.

§0.2: Urban Citizenship

I focus on urban citizenship for several reasons. First, urban citizenship is a useful political category that emerged in a particular form in the 21st century, encompassing a series of historical forms of thinking and practicing citizenship through rights claims in urban areas, outside the parameters of the nation-state. Aristotle, for instance, conceptualized citizenship in terms of the polis prior to the idea of the nation-state, and the ancient Greek concept of *Isonomia*, meaning ‘equality of political rights’, was used by thinkers such as Herodotus and Thucydides to designate a citizenship of the city. The

⁴ In my usage of “depoliticization” I follow Chantal Mouffe, who, drawing from Schmitt’s work, uses the concept in her antagonistic reading of the modern liberal state which moves towards depoliticization. She argues that politicization “never ceases because undecidability continues to inhabit the decision. Every consensus appears as a stabilization of something essentially unstable and chaotic”. Elsewhere, Mouffe mentions that the key concern for democratic politics is not a matter of dissolving the us/them, inside/outside opposition, but drawing it, as she says, “in a way which is compatible with the recognition of the pluralism which is constitutive of modern democracy”. See: Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, London: Verso (2000), 136; and Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political*, Oxford: Routledge (2005), 14.

working-class uprisings of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Autonomists in the urban centers of Italy in the 1970s, both framed as struggles for urban citizenship, are interesting cases that consider urban citizenship as offering a valuable lens through which to consider the city as a legitimate basis for exercising democratic rights.⁵ A growing number of scholars, particularly political theorists, sociologists, critical urbanists, and more recently geographers, have utilized this category to explore concrete socio-economic and political problems under late Capitalism, such as inaccessible political processes, disenfranchisement, sociopolitical inequality, environmental calamity, the growing primacy of economic competition over social solidarity, limited educational opportunities, and unaffordable housing. These issues are generated by a dynamic interplay of political, economic, and social forces, often pertaining to issues of capital growth and global migration, and all of which are regularly cited as expressions of an increasing democratic deficit in the city.⁶ The key actors in the area under investigation are those who are oppressed and marginalized in society, by one or more of the above issues. Alerting us to the need to rethink the analytical category of state citizenship for ongoing political injustices, urban citizenship contributes to a better understanding of the quotidian social struggles of urban inhabitants.

⁵ The Paris Commune of 1871 was, as Manuel Castells citing Henri Lefebvre argues, a distinctly urban revolution which attempted to restructure capital industrialization, particularly through its accumulation and management. Castells, 1983, 15. The Autonomist movement was part of a series of sociopolitical insurgent movements occurring in Italy during the 1970s. Initiated by factory workers, the movement evolved into a militant uprising but ultimately perished as a result of repressive statist strategies and collective criminalization: Negri 2005, 36.

⁶ For greater detail of how these issues link with capitalism, see: Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, "The new spirit of Capitalism," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 18.3 (2005): 161-188; and Saskia Sassen, *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 2014), which deals with marginalization and expulsion under global capitalism.

Despite the growing currency of this concept in recent years, some criticize it as lacking in analytical usefulness. Citing cultural geographer Don Mitchell, Monica Varsanyi has noted that “the growing literature on the relationship between urban space and forms of citizenship...is not yet well grounded in the actual legal and social exigencies of city life, operating too often on the normative, idealist plain defined by the political philosophy discourse.”⁷ I would agree with this claim, and with the argument that urban citizenship should be deployed as a concept to strengthen our tenuous grasp on concrete social struggles, each unique by virtue of the specificities of their contexts. Yet, I would also add that privileging one issue or group over another obscures other hidden power structures which urban citizenship as a theoretical term can help elucidate. My project is a small attempt to interrupt this mode of thinking about citizenship. However, this requires an analysis of the specific ways urbanization interacts with and impacts on democratic notions of citizenship, which I briefly outline in the following section.

§0.3: Urbanization, Citizenship

Urban theory, predominantly taking its cue from the Chicago school of urban sociology, notably from scholars such as Robert Park and Louis Wirth, has become increasingly difficult to pinpoint, due to both its increasing abundance and complexity.⁸ As Neil Brenner notes, the concept of urbanism, adumbrated in Wirth’s famous 1930s writings, which once described a way of life in a densely populated city, was soon

⁷ Monica Varsanyi, "Interrogating “Urban Citizenship” vis-à-vis Undocumented Migration," *Citizenship Studies* 10.2 (2006): 240.

⁸ See: Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life." *American Journal of sociology* 44.1 (1938): 1-24, and Manuel Castells and Alan Sheridan, "The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach," trans. Alan Sheridan, *Social Structure and Social Change* 1 (1977).

succeeded by early twenty-first century theories of urbanism as a planetary phenomenon.⁹ A dominant conception was that urbanism was “devoid of any clear definitional parameters, morphological coherence, or cartographic fixity.”¹⁰ In this way, current accounts of urbanism delineate “an emergent process of urbanization” that escapes definitions of the city as a material thing or place, which assumes territorial urban units.¹¹ Urbanization, David Harvey notes, preceded the historical stage of capitalism insofar as it required a built environment that could support production, consumption, and exchange. Although it preceded early industrial capitalism, urbanization continued and accelerated under it.

Others, such as Neil Brenner, have followed suit, centering urbanization on capitalism. However, as Natalie Oswin rightly argues, insisting on capitalism’s sociopolitical destruction of urban space is disquieting: while it is a very real and ubiquitous phenomenon, one should carefully examine the multiplicity of forms that capitalism takes, while amalgamating with other creative destructive forces such as “patriarchy, colonialism, racism, nationalism, and heteronormativity,” not as a monstrous entity that is *the* planetary enemy, but as a series of complex, and fragmented processes.¹² Nevertheless, Oswin adds, “urban injustice has no centre, and a progressive urban theory must not have one either.”¹³ Urbanization, then, can be thought of as an expression of myriad power structures that are mutually constitutive, yet not always visible. Henri

⁹ Neil Brenner, “Theses on Urbanization,” *Public Culture* 25.1 (2013): 85-114.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Natalie Oswin, “Planetary Urbanization: A View from Outside.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* (2016): 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Lefebvre observes this as a dialectical process of “the State of growth and the growth of the State”¹⁴, which dissolves urban life and degrades democracy and creative communities by increasing the primacy of wealth and status in the city.¹⁵ On this claim, Andy Merrifield adds that it functions as a push/pull effect occurring between centre and periphery where we see “a kind of exteriorization of the inside as well as interiorization of the outside: the urban *unfolds* into the countryside just as the countryside *folds back* into the city.”¹⁶ From here, we can derive a modest definition of “urbanization” to include both the city’s economic expansion from rural to urban as well as the expansion of the latter into the former.¹⁷

Urbanization poses serious challenges for the democratic vision of nation-state citizenship, which has historically been regarded as a static concept. This is largely because urbanization expresses a distinct feature of “neoliberalization”, a form of governmentality and political rationality that, as Wendy Brown cogently argues, results in a scenario where “[t]he political sphere, along with every other dimension of contemporary existence, is submitted to an economic rationality; or, put the other way around, not only is the human being configured exhaustively as homo oeconomicus, but

¹⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, eds. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden, trans. Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner, and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 98; Lefebvre describes the phases of state growth as a “positive” marker of state power, whereby the state assumes responsibility for growth, which accelerates into limitless growth, and even endangered growth. “Arms, energy, technology, etc.” are central means of state advancement with the world market. This involves growth, both economical and ideological (e.g. the taking of “towns and regions, etc. towards “a higher level”).

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 20.

¹⁶ Andy Merrifield, "The Right to the City and Beyond: Notes on a Lefebvrian Reconceptualization," *City* 15.3–4 (2011): 469.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 20.

all dimensions of human life are cast in terms of a market rationality.”¹⁸ In this, economic competition is privileged over social solidarity, and citizenship seems to erode in the morphing of democratic political subjectivity into something else, which as Brown suggests, means that “the suffusion of both the state and the subject with economic rationality has the effect of radically transforming and curtailing the criteria for good social policy vis-à-vis classical liberal democracy.”¹⁹ While the model of liberalism that denotes free and rational subjects spans all the way back to the writings of John Locke, it has evolved in a manner that directly relates to the present hold that the neoliberal state’s governmentality has over the social, subordinating the latter to the former.²⁰ It is in response to these socio-politically marginalizing effects of urbanization that theories of urban citizenship are developed.

In response, Monica Versanyi notes that a surge of scholars have emerged, who advocate more democratic political structures with regards to decision-making in order to counter undemocratic, privatized economic development in the city.²¹ The term “citizenship” is used broadly to denote legal membership within a jurisdiction consisting of equal rights and duties (e.g. paying taxes, voting) and participation in political decisions. Yet, in response to the processes of urbanization described above, “urban citizenship”, which I refer to in this thesis as a sociological conception extending beyond its legal definition and suggesting its essentially contested character, has become an

¹⁸ Wendy Brown, *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 40.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 44.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 43-44. Both classical liberal economists, such as philosopher Adam Smith (1723-1790) who follows John Locke and is well-known for his “invisible hand” concept of civil liberties under a rule of law and free-market capitalism, and Neoliberals, such as the American economist Milton Freidman (1912-2006), share the idea of individual and economic freedom with minimal state intervention.

²¹ Varsanyi, “Interrogating ‘Urban Citizenship’ vis-à-vis Undocumented Migration,” 233.

attractive alternative for those who wish to gain more control over the governance of and political participation in the city.²² In this vision of citizenship, the city is viewed as generating possibilities for transforming traditional notions of political membership by shifting the domain through which rights are claimed, and presently conceived, to the city, albeit in a manner that does not merely replicate its historical construction as enabled by the centralization of power expressed by the nation-state.

§0.4: Sovereignty, Aporia, Politics

Despite attempts to foreground novel articulations of citizenship in the city, theories of urban citizenship tend to reproduce conflated and exclusionary visions of politics inherited from the state in their models. This is expressed in the way that a sovereign politics²³ continuously resurfaces, wherein individual sovereign actors are privileged. These actors fulfill the function of an ontology of the modern liberal state, authorizing its continual performance as the center of political life. This, I argue, is due to a fundamental entanglement of the urban and citizenship with a particular logic of state

²² A sociological conception of citizenship challenges traditional notions of citizenship limited to legal membership within a political community by extending the definition of citizenship to consider other bases of political agency for groups and individuals (e.g. undocumented labour migrants and activists) to engage in political acts (e.g. social movements) without permission from the state.

²³ By ‘sovereign politics’, I mean a politics that speaks on behalf of those who have individual authority and the capacity to form judgments and determine themselves, a politics grounded in the image of the autonomous liberal subject that is defined, albeit arguably, within a Schmittian notion of a territorial sovereignty. As Genevieve Nootens suggests, most liberals, including Will Kymlicka and David Miller, underestimate the relationship between the autonomous individual and territorial sovereignty, instead focusing on the right to national self-determination and the preservation of the dominant national culture (35, 39, 2006). However, what is neglected in this view is the powerful statist assumption of rule over a delineated territory. While John Agnew (1994) famously called the state-centric view of territorial sovereignty “the territorial trap,” what is overlooked are the non-spatial forms of territorial control of sovereignty in its various forms, be it through regulatory regimes, informal government control and, not least, “linking the principle of democratic legitimacy to the community of the citizens as a nation,” which is historically defined within a geographic territory and shared government (44, 2006).

sovereignty, one that undergirds both and obfuscates the possibility of multiple logics and ways of being.

Carl Schmitt, following Thomas Hobbes, gave one of the most powerful accounts that has hitherto captivated the statist political imagination. He argued that sovereignty is a borderline concept that preserves itself through a logic of the conceptual and physical division of spatial boundaries. Adopting the Hobbesian view of the brutish state of nature, Schmitt conceded the use of violence and wall-building in securing state borders as a prerequisite for the internal flourishing of a peaceful political community. While this is only one view of sovereignty, and certainly not the dominant one,²⁴ it is often taken for granted in terms of its character as a borderline concept, “being both of the border and at the border of conceptuality”, in the sense that it is “both inside and outside the law” as the sovereign can transgress the law at the moment of emergency.²⁵ Predicated on an inside/outside logic, this view of sovereignty, as R.B.J. Walker argues, “affirms an ontology of spatial separations... that enable a capacity to draw the line between the legitimate and illegitimate.”²⁶ By invoking the relation between space and law in his

²⁴ These would be the liberals whom Schmitt was critiquing. As John McCormick points out, Schmitt took liberalism to conceal the political, its abandonment of exceptional prudence, “the situation for which the constitution does not provide explicit direction—with a personal decision as well” hence, scientific “natural law is no longer binding for the sovereign”. In other words, liberal constitutional reliance on mechanistic, rational order “hampers the state’s ability to deal with the exception”, depoliticizing the state, and repressing understanding of friend/enemy relations. See: John McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism: Against Politics as Technology* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 149, 151, 213, 228, 260 and Chantal Mouffe who highlights the power of this critique: Mouffe, Chantal, ed. *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*. Verso, 1999.

²⁵ Slavoj Žižek, Eric Santner, and Kenneth Reinhard, *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology, with a New Preface*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 15.

²⁶ R. B. J. Walker, *Out of Line: Essays on the Politics of Boundaries and the Limits of Modern Politics*. (London: Routledge, 2015); Quoting David Held, Bruno Gulli notes that “[t]he doctrine of sovereignty has two distinct dimensions: the first concerned with the ‘internal’ aspect of sovereignty; the second concerned with the external ... The former involves the belief that a political body established as sovereign rightly exercises the ‘supreme command’ over a particular society ... The latter, external, dimension involves the claim that here is no final and absolute authority above and beyond the sovereign state” (1995: 100). Bruno

works, through an explicit account of legality, legitimacy, law and power, I believe that Schmitt offers a vital, yet often overlooked, understanding of sovereignty. Carl Schmitt reveals the enigmatic character of sovereignty, one that requires a ceaseless creation of antagonisms in order to sustain itself, and the way it is imagined conceptually and physically.²⁷ This is what I call the ‘aporia of sovereignty’.

Aporia is the name Derrida uses to describe the moment when philosophical examination has come to an impasse, unable to reach any certain agreement.²⁸ It is a specific “spatiotemporal opening” that presumes movement towards a final destination, form, or closure, but can never be finalized, therefore “returning us to other openings.”²⁹ In this sense, *aporia* could be conceived as “a black hole of certainty”: “a line, boundary, or distinction that creates the possibility, necessity, and impossibility of the delimited entities or concepts.”³⁰ Stephen Ross describes its function as a Greek “invention in conjunction with their understanding of limit and unlimit” and “of unconquerable obstacles resulting from conflicts in its understanding of its own intelligibility [that] cry out for a resolution that cannot be achieved within the conditions from which they emerge.”³¹ Yet, conditions for *aporia* extend beyond an absence of finality: it is a boundary drawing *practice* that, “in the process of being drawn, simultaneously constitutes entities, categories, or concepts as mutually incompatible and jointly

Galli, “The Sovereign Exception: Notes on Schmitt’s Word that Sovereign is He Who Decides on the Exception,” *Glossator* 1 (2009): 23–30.

²⁷ On this point, see also: David Campbell, *Politics without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993.

²⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Aporias: Dying—Awaiting (One Another at) the "Limits of Truth"(Mourir—s' Attendre aux "Limites de la Vérité")*. USA: Stanford University Press, 1993.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Delacey Tedesco, “The Urbanization of Politics: Relational Ontologies or Aporetic Practices?,” *Alternatives* 37.4 (2012): 340.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 10.

necessary.”³² The formation, transposition, and deferral of conceptual boundaries is a distinctive feature of the aporia. For Delacey Tedesco, who expands on Jacques Derrida’s renderings of the aporia, boundary lines between nature and culture act as “transition narratives” which are constitutive of hidden narratives between politics and its limits: within the boundary, “politics is possible and without, impossible; yet, the instability of this boundary makes politics continually both necessary and impossible, leading to a consistent pressure to resort to sovereignty authorizations to secure politics.”³³ Following this line of thought, I suggest that reading the aporia as a ‘boundary practice’ provides a useful methodological approach to analyzing the aporias that are pervasive in accounts of the urban and citizenship.

To move from an urban domain within the state to one outside in the urban, in hopes of bypassing the destructive forces of urbanization, is to slice apart the urban as an urbanizing force, and pose the urban as a place closer to the most suitable and “natural” political community of freedom and equality. Likewise, to articulate a notion of citizenship affirms a specific conception of what “natural” is, as a “natural political community”, in contradistinction to a “nature” in which people who do not fit within this image exist, thereby reveals a fundamental fracture in the very notion of ‘people’, and in turn, a politics, which is continuously maintained through practices of excluding constructed antagonisms (e.g. geographical, linguistic, blood). The notion of a people in an urban domain works as a container for politics occurring against an outside until both categories no longer viably capture it. The concepts of the urban and of citizenship, I will

³² Ibid, 3.

³³ Ibid, 332.

show, are distinctive features of sovereignty itself, and hence of the aporia of sovereignty which Derrida, following Schmitt, describes as the volatile relation between law and justice.³⁴

Why does the Schmittian logic of sovereignty keep surfacing in theories of urban citizenship? The gap I intend to address, and my central argument in this thesis, is that these theories fail to recognize that the twin logics of "urbanization" and "citizenship" are aporetic: there can be no universally understood, separate domain of urban citizenship, only different approaches to dealing with its aporetic logics politically. If sovereignty is an aporetic practice, then responses to it are also aporetic. That is why I agree with Versanyi when she writes that hitherto "urban citizenship as a project and status...diverts us away from the more important and immediate project of challenging the boundaries around what is still the hegemonic container of the citizenry: the nation-state."³⁵ In this regard, as she claims, such successes "should not be celebrated as the end of the struggle, but rather, the initial successes of a much longer struggle."³⁶

§0.5: Chapter Outline

Having sketched out some of the questions and backdrop against which I develop my arguments in this thesis, I will now give a brief outline of each chapter.

In chapter one I examine theories and problems pertaining to the question of urban citizenship. In this chapter, I would like to briefly survey some of the literature that has attempted to articulate a form of citizenship separate from the national state, setting

³⁴ Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority'", eds. Drucilla Cornell, Michael Rosenfield and David G. Carlson, *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, New York: Routledge (1992).

³⁵ Varsanyi, "Interrogating "Urban Citizenship" vis-à-vis Undocumented Migration," 244.

³⁶ Ibid.

the context for this thesis's investigation of the common traps that limit these accounts' ability to fully achieve it. Specifically, I explore how urban citizenship is conceived by examining several routes through scholars, not all of whom specialize in urban citizenship per se, but who nonetheless contribute important questions and themes for navigating the literature. These include: Rainer Bauböck, Randy Lippert, Henri Lefebvre, and Doreen Massey. A persisting idea in these writings is that there can be a different way of conceiving politics that does not rely on recognition by the nation-state, a distinct form of citizenship apart from the state. Yet sovereign politics reemerges in these visions, either as rights claims conditioned by the state's legal framework or as attached to a human rights regime that glides on an idealizing, depoliticizing plain. Thinking through this tendency, I highlight a crucial aspect to which these literatures do not directly attend: the conflict of the urban as consisting of an urbanizing set of forces in relation to citizenship. While they provide incisive critiques of the dominant nation-state ontology that has, for centuries, defined citizenship, what is lacking in these approaches is how the city cannot, as they suggest, be detached from the state.

While the modern state appears ineluctable in these analyses, a closer examination of them leaves open important questions about the foundation of these reproductive tendencies, questions concerning what would be at stake if one were to construct an urban citizenship outside the state. As chapter 1 will show, there are good reasons for all of these approaches, many of which can illuminate issues of social struggle and order. Their concerted logic results in the claim that "becoming" political outside state-citizenship is realizable through urban citizenship. However, while these accounts try to go beyond the traditional nation-state form of political community by enacting a right to

urban citizenship, they tend to gloss over what kind of “citizenship” relates to the exclusionary politics they seek to overcome. Thus, they tend to privilege certain actors over others. For this crucial reason, I argue that if one is to take the claims of an urban citizenship seriously, she must first consider what is at stake in efforts to specify what urban citizenship might be. Crucially, they fail to recognize that the twin logics of “citizenship” and the “urban” are irreconcilable without state sovereignty. No final form or solution to urban-citizenship from outside the dimension of the nation-state is attained in these approaches without invoking state sovereignty.

Following Jacques Derrida’s notion of aporia, Chapter 2 explores the aporetic origins of the two processes underlying urban citizenship: the urban and citizenship, showing how attempts to reconcile them are untenable since such a distinction is a characteristic effect of sovereignty itself. Hence, both terms, I argue, are aporetic insofar as their conditions of possibility depend on the impossibility of their unification, wherein ‘becoming’ urban requires cancelling them out, along with the process of urbanization and modernization from which the urban derives its meaning. Here, citizenship as a universal attainment would similarly abolish the distinction between citizenship and non-citizenship. In this sense, my conception of urban citizenship does not fall into a liberal cosmopolitan/Kantian theory of universal citizenship within a global community which often undergirds the difficulty that theories of urban citizenship have in escaping the logic of state sovereignty. The nature/culture distinction and transition, I will show, emerges when the global city evokes ontological certainty and so re-inscribes sovereignty in a slightly different form. What an analysis of the aporias of sovereignty within citizenship and urbanization enables is a fuller appreciation of the complex and

contradictory practices that idealize the urban, and conceal other possibilities for being and acting politically, possibilities that do not conform to dominant narratives of culture/nature and self/nation.

In Chapter 3, I explore how urban citizenship can reconfigure, rather than reproduce the statist ontology of authority. Following Jean-Luc Nancy, I reconsider the vocabulary of singularity implied by the statist notion of political community. I first suggest that instead of translating the multiplicity of political actors in an urban model of political community into simplistic dualisms that distinguish an inside membership *contra* an outside, we can begin to discern places where we would not normally consider urban politics to occur. We can do this when the state is decentered from this understanding of urban politics. I then offer a brief analysis of aporetic practices in the contestation of the space of Berlin's Tempelhof field, considering previous suggestions and adopting James Holston's theory of insurgent citizenship to show how new forms of political action transpired. Specifically, I examine how, through struggles against urbanization plans for Tempelhof, Berliners enacted political spaces and alternative visions of subjectivities and authorities, which functioned as the temporary ground from which the dominant ontology of the political could be negotiated. My central aim in this chapter is to show that, despite the presence of aporia in the concept of the urban and citizenship, the need for a fixed conception of state sovereign security is not an absolutely necessary path for theories of urban citizenship: the source for democratically negotiating alternative forms of authority and rights over space lies where it originated, within the city.

Chapter I: Locating Urban Citizenship

What is meant by “urban citizenship”? Current practices suggest four possibilities. These are: enfranchisement sanctuary practices, the right to the city, and a relational ontology of the global city. In this chapter, I would like to briefly survey some of the literature that has attempted to articulate a form of citizenship separate from the national state, setting the context for an investigation of the common traps that limit the ability of these accounts to fully achieve it.

§1.1: Enfranchisement

The first theory of urban citizenship concerns the municipal enfranchisement of non-citizens according to their status as city residents. Rainer Bauböck, taking a normative democratic theory approach, examines the general neglect of “external citizenship” in political thought. However, he seeks to overcome nationalist perceptions of citizenship and revive the city as a source of democracy legitimacy in one of the most rigorous accounts of urban citizenship today. In doing so, he suggests that although national voting rights are limited to state citizens, this condition should not apply to local elections, since they deal with everyday local government affairs such as public housing, health, services, and education.³⁷ In doing so, he emphasizes the need to recognize the “universal value of citizenship as membership in a self-governing political community”, introducing the *stakeholder* principle of inclusion.³⁸ The importance of this idea is to conceive the city not as a mere subunit of the nation-state, but rather, as a constitutive unit for the state. However, while this principle of inclusion advocates for a cosmopolitan

³⁷ Rainer Bauböck, “Reinventing urban citizenship,” *Citizenship Studies* 7, no. 2 (2003): 156, 151–152.

³⁸ Rainer Bauböck, “The Rights and Duties of External Citizenship.” *Citizenship Studies* 13, no. 5 (2009): 479, 492.

notion of citizenship, it also implies a model of autonomy that depends on a conditional legal claim to urban citizenship inclusion based on two criteria of residence: first, the person “depend[s] on that community for long-term protection of their basic rights (dependency criterion)” and, second, they “are or have been subjected to that community’s political authorities for a significant period over the course of their lives.”³⁹

A central contribution provided by this account of “urban citizenship”, as Myer Siemiatycki suggests, is that it rethinks notions of ‘social inclusion’ to encompass better ways of representing marginalized communities, such as “First Nations, visible minorities, immigrant groups, social disadvantaged persons.”⁴⁰ For Bauböck, this local franchise would be especially favourable to immigrants who are attracted to big cities for economic and cultural opportunities. On this view, reforms would only be possible through the city’s separation from national sovereignty via municipal judicial autonomy as a process of democratic local self-government. In formulating a model for urban political autonomy, Bauböck seeks to include those without nominal citizenship by transforming national conceptions into an urban citizenship.⁴¹ Citizenship is thus re-examined as independent from state recognition. He writes that “local self-government requires a firm territorial basis and that membership is therefore best determined by residence.”⁴² This study suggests that while there is no *legal* form of urban citizenship separate from state citizenship, there nevertheless could be, implying that urban citizenship provides greater social inclusion for the marginalized than state citizenship.

³⁹ Ibid, 492.

⁴⁰ Myer Siemiatycki, “Immigration and Urban Politics in Toronto,” *Third International Metropolis Conference, Israel, Israel, Papers from political Participation Across Immigrant Ethnoracial Communities: Comparing World Cities* (1998): 11, 14.

⁴¹ Bauböck, “The Rights and Duties of External Citizenship,” 142.

⁴² Rainer Bauböck, “Reinventing urban citizenship,” *Citizenship Studies* 7, no. 2 (2003): 156.

This principle of local self-government proposes the opportunity for transforming citizenship from within the city, an opportunity that is “emancipated from imperatives of national sovereignty and homogeneity, which become a homebase for cosmopolitan democracy.”⁴³ Yet while this model might reduce some of the exclusions of state citizenship, it takes the foundation of the individual autonomy of the city that it promotes for granted. This form of autonomy remains a feature of self-determination that is permitted by the state and facilitates new forms of exclusion through its need for determining membership on a provisional basis for voting purposes. This basis would require deciding where the city’s boundary lines are drawn, thereby closing off urban citizenship from non-status migrants and all other non-long-term community members by remaining subject to the rules of the state.⁴⁴ In other words, while Bauböck recognizes such a subjectivity, even if the city was to become autonomous, it would still be restrictive in that other individuals and groups would still be excluded.

To clarify my point, let us look at the question of exclusion missing in this model of cosmopolitan democracy. Bauböck rightly acknowledges the difficulty in determining the decision making that follows “[o]nce we take democratic self-government at local level seriously,” arguing that “the citizens themselves should be involved in decisions about changing the boundaries of their local polities.”⁴⁵ This idea expresses an important point, that there cannot be a ‘people’ unless someone decides who the people are, in which case someone would need to decide through a referendum concerning the voting procedure and the city’s borders, and in which case boundary lines around the city’s

⁴³ Ibid, 139.

⁴⁴ Ibid 146.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

periphery would need to be drawn.⁴⁶ While he recognizes that there is no easy solution to such questions, he concludes by suggesting that there must nevertheless be “procedural fairness.”⁴⁷ Yet, in this, such a model fails to address the other kinds of exclusive state practices at the local level. For example, as Monica Versanyi points out, if we take Bauböck’s proposal of a bounded urban citizenship seriously, it would entail those with urban citizenship and national citizenship, and those with only urban citizenship who would thereby become “second class citizens.”⁴⁸ This would contradict his universal cosmopolitan ideal of citizenship and produce the difficult problem with current citizenship: “the necessity of it to be bounded and to have insiders and outsiders.”⁴⁹ In this sense, it is suggested that urban citizenship maintains practices of marginalization and diverts attention away from challenging present exclusions of national-citizenship for those such as non-status migrants and “illegals.”⁵⁰ While this model provides a useful starting point for what could be further explored in urban citizenship, it tends to overlook what would be at stake in a model for unbounded, universal citizenship and in directly challenging nation-state citizenship.⁵¹

§1.2: City as Sanctuary

In contrast to voting rights, other versions of “urban-citizenship” concern access to services, as exemplified in the Sanctuary City movement, where undocumented

⁴⁶ Bauböck, “Reinventing urban citizenship,” 143.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Varsanyi, “Interrogating “Urban Citizenship” vis-à-vis Undocumented Migration.” *Citizenship Studies* 10, no. 2 (2006): 239.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ For example, see Joseph Carens (1987).

migrants have access to municipal services without being asked their legal status and fearing risk of deportation. In this context, sanctuary is provided by two different groups: the church and municipal authorities. Scholars such as Randy Lippert, whose writings offer one of the most comprehensive accounts of Canadian sanctuary to date, views it as a liberal governmental program guised as a practice of freedom to protect “helpless” migrants.⁵² Adopting Michel Foucault’s governmentality perspective for his conceptual approach, Lippert describes sanctuary as a confluence of two logics: “pastoral” and “sovereign.” Despite Foucault’s much more elaborate genealogical meanings, the former in Lippert’s work refers to practices of “care” and “protection” by church authorities, whereas the latter denotes communities offering refuge for migrants. Both, nevertheless, act to protect those threatened by deportation by federal immigration authorities.⁵³ The notion of sovereignty allows liberal subjects to exercise choice and freedoms, whereas pastoral practices offer care for those in need, and both, he argues, are promoted through “advanced liberalism.”⁵⁴ Lippert’s analysis is useful as it supports a central tenet of this thesis: that current practices of urban citizenship do not challenge sovereign governmental powers, but are often constituted by them, particularly as an aspect of advanced liberal governing power and territorial control.⁵⁵

The other version of sanctuary departs from church and community protections, and involves protection by municipal authorities, providing a subversion of these governmental practices. For Jen Bagelman and Vicky Squire, the Sanctuary City

⁵² Randy Lippert, *Sanctuary, Sovereignty, Sacrifice: Canadian Sanctuary Incidents, Power, and Law*. Vancouver: UBC Press. (2011): 9.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 3–4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 14.

movement challenges both statist and pastoral logics of power by problematizing distinctions between citizen/non-citizen and protector/protected, thus welcoming non-citizens.⁵⁶ While they agree with Lippert on how practices of governmentality underlie sanctuary practices, they also show that sanctuary practices can disrupt sovereign renderings of refugees and migrants as “helpless” apolitical beings. Such disruptions are possible only through the *taking* of sanctuary, rather than waiting for it to be “granted.”⁵⁷ Evading exclusionist state migratory policies becomes possible not by requesting the recognition of rights within the state from the outside, but within municipal contexts, through acts whereby non-citizens constitute themselves as political subjects “in their own right”, as opposed to being deemed worthy or not by the state.⁵⁸ Bagelman and Squire’s version of urban citizenship is useful because it acknowledges the difficulty of constituting new forms of political subjectivity without demanding inclusion in the structures that discount its voice. This involves conceiving political action beyond traditional modes of thought whereby action is rendered intelligible (that is, ‘political’) by the state.

§1.3: Right to the City

Following a separate, albeit similar, stream of literature on urban-citizenship, Marxist French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre introduced the pivotal concept of urban politics with his “right to the city” theory. During the time of his writings, Lefebvre observed the intensifying contradiction between the city’s destruction

⁵⁶ Vicki Squire and Jennifer Bagelman, “Taking Not Waiting: Space, Temporality and Politics in the City of Sanctuary Movement,” in *Citizenship, Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movement* (Routledge: 2010): 156–157.

⁵⁷ *Ibid* 160, 159.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 147.

and the intensification of the urban, referring to France in the 1960s, and particularly the events of May 1968.⁵⁹ What Lefebvre sees is a market logic that has taken over the city, turning it into a commodified and alienated place where creative capacities are crushed and social relations are reduced to economic exchanges. In the midst of this scene, he struggles to fathom how people could accept the alienating changes beset by capitalism.⁶⁰ His Marxist theory of urban politics, as a response to the disparaging phenomenon he calls “urbanization”, is often regarded as a revolutionary configuration of citizenship insofar as he deploys a politics that seeks to “reject the state, that maintains itself as an open and evolving project, and that comes to understand itself as more than anything a democratic project, as a struggle by people to shake off the control of capital and the state in order to manage their affairs for themselves.”⁶¹

In responding to an emergent urbanization while writing in the wake of the philosophy of difference literature of the 1960s, Lefebvre aims to pursue a strategy based on difference and the shared struggle against “indifference” in the city by changing the way people think about the production of space. In particular, he rejects the notion of the “disappearance” of political centrality in the city, its loss to urbanization.⁶² His theory of the city posits the “highest form of rights: liberty, individualization in socialization,

⁵⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on cities*, eds. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, Oxford: Blackwell, (1996): 18, 20, 65; 1960s France was an important period in the development of Lefebvre’s ideas. During this time, massive demonstration emerged in protest against capitalism and American imperialism. For a greater detailed explication of Lefebvre’s thought during this period, see: Lefebvre, Henri. *The explosion: Marxism and the French upheaval*. NYU Press, 1969. For Lefebvre’s critical response to the Situationists, the organization who play a significant role in the events leading up to May 1968 uprisings, and particularly against their “abstract utopianism”. see: Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique of everyday life*. Vol. 2. Verso, 1991.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 22.

⁶¹ Mark Purcell, "Possible Worlds: Henri Lefebvre and the Right to the City." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 36.1 (2014): 145.

⁶² *Ibid*, 26, 120.

environs (*habitat*) and a way of living together thus manifested as the struggle for urban unification.”⁶³ In substantiating these rights, Lefebvre proposes a renewed form of citizenship defined by the right to the city, also shared by a number of others including David Harvey, Neil Brenner, Nik Theodore, and Murray Bookchin.⁶⁴ Lefebvre views urban citizenship as enfranchisement, not only for residents living in an area for an extended amount of time, but also for those “inhabiting” and producing the space of the urban.⁶⁵ He calls for an urban revolution which necessarily requires envisioning utopia as a basis for action against capitalist urbanization, as well as a democratic restructuring of decision-making power in the urban sphere.⁶⁶ Mark Purcell calls this solution “an urban politics of the inhabitant,” wherein a right to the city, and in turn, national enfranchisement, is granted not through birthright but through everyday participation.

This right to the city also grants inhabitants the right to participate, to appropriate, and to

⁶³ For further elaboration of this view, see: Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 1996; Murray Bookchin, *Urbanization Without Cities: The Rise and Decline of Citizenship* (Montreal: Black Rose Books Ltd, 1992), 18, 19.

⁶⁴ Following Lefebvre and David Harvey, Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore similarly view urban citizenship as a solution to the problem of urbanization. For them, this solution consists of “alternative urban futures, grounded upon the priorities of radical democracy, social justice, and grassroots empowerment”.⁶⁴ Others, too, such as Murray Bookchin, view urbanization as a severe threat to cities, though he takes a more eco-anarchic approach to urban citizenship. His solution is a “renewed” form of urban citizenship. As such, he calls for a move from ‘culture’ to ‘nature’, arguing for recovering “not only an ecological concept of the city and an active citizenry, but the creation of a new politics that combines the high ideal of a participatory citizenship”.⁶⁴ These rights are not articulated as legal rights nor intended to be positivist (inscribed on paper), but rather, they are a starting point, a ‘utopian’ vision, for a yet to be determined destination. Urbanization, it is suggested here, can be countered by re-thinking the production of space by enacting such rights in order to create new urban forms in the center (e.g. through restructuring decision-making).

⁶⁵ By “producing the space”, I mean participating in the appropriation (e.g. use value; to “physically access, occupy, and use urban space”), production of capital, and the visual and physical organization of the city. See Mark Purcell, “Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant,” *GeoJournal* 58.2–3 (2002): 100, 102, 103.

⁶⁶ Lefebvre uses the term “utopia” to refer to “the search for a place that does not yet exist,” a visualizing term that he deems necessary for realizing the possibility of an urban based on residency. His utopia is distinguished from the “worst utopias” (or dystopias) which, “in the name of positivism, imposes the harshest restraints”, insofar as his is “constantly subjected to critique” and people are “in charge of their lives”. Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 15, 21

“clean air, housing...[and] democratic participation in decision-making”⁶⁷. Though conventional enfranchisement does give citizens a degree of influence in economic decisions, this is only to a limited extent since “the state can still control the context in which capital is invested (through tax policy, labor law, environmental restrictions, etc.)”⁶⁸

In this model, Lefebvre’s right to the city is useful in that it would give urban inhabitants a form of citizenship that grants more direct power insofar as they are included in institutional decision-making, thereby providing them “direct voice in any decision that contributes to the production of space” unlike current conventions, where such power is limited to state citizenship, or, as Bauböck explains, where urban social power is based on a criterion of inclusion.⁶⁹ These claims have important consequences for the broader domain of urban citizenship in that they problematize the source of rights claims derived from the state, shifting attention to the city. The right to the city urges urban inhabitants to claim the right to change themselves through civic participation. However, this right is framed as a distinctly anti-capitalist struggle, which beckons a city and right defined in distinctly capitalist terms.⁷⁰ How do we shift power from the

⁶⁷ Peter Marcuse, “Whose Right (s) to What City?,” eds. Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse, and Margit Mayer, *Cities for People, Not for Profit: Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City* (2012): 34.

⁶⁸ Mark, Purcell, “Excavating Lefebvre: The Right to the City and its Urban Politics of the Inhabitant.” *GeoJournal* 58.2–3 (2002): 102

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 102.

⁷⁰ How exactly does anti-capitalist struggle beckon a city defined in capitalist terms? The Hegelian dialectical logic was crucial for articulating Lefebvre’s position. Lefebvre was introduced to Marx through Hegel, who played a prominent role in the development of Lefebvre’s humanist version of Marxism ideas. See: Chris Butler, *Henri Lefebvre: Spatial Politics, Everyday Life and the Right to the City* (New York; Abingdon: Routledge, 2012). and Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible* (London; New York: A&C Black, 2004), 30-31. While Lefebvre suggests that Hegel provides the means by which we can challenge and transcend him” he nevertheless repeats his same logic (34). As Butler suggest, Lefebvre’s “open totality is based on the notion that the dialectical resolution of contradictions restores totality temporarily, only to allow an opening for future transformations”. For Butler, this basis for political pluralism “contributes to a theoretical ignorance of the ‘unity of reality’” (18).

privileged when making claims without reifying it through emergent social power structures that privilege certain rights (e.g. economic) over all others (e.g. cultural, sexual, environmental and so on)? This is one of the central question underlying this thesis.

Marxist urban theorist Andy Merrifield would agree with the need to invoke a right to participate in the core action of everyday life on the basis of an obliteration of urban society by forces of capital urbanization. He argues, however, that the right to the city overlooks a paradox rooted in urbanization. As Merrifield states, global urbanization reinforced Marx's theory of "primitive accumulation in a 21st-century neoliberal context," acting as the basis from which the capitalist class can form and continuously reform.⁷¹ "The problem," he continues, "emerges when we (correctly) identify the dominant role finance capital plays in global neoliberalism, only to then, in the same breath, voice some looser political invocation that 'the urban' must now be the principal site of any contestation of this project."⁷² That is to say, the problem is not so much a search for solutions in the same site as the problem or source, but in the dangers of overlooking the tendency to reproduce the same exclusionary logic.

These patterns risk further amplification when Lefebvre reduces his definition of inhabitants to working-class terms, when he writes that "only the working class can become the agent" of the right to the city.⁷³ Anna Plyushteva, citing David Harvey, notes that while it is made clear that Lefebvre's right to the city is a vision of democratic ideals in a city that is never fully complete but always changing, "only granting the Right to the

⁷¹ Andy Merrifield, "The Right to the City and Beyond: Notes on a Lefebvrian Reconceptualization." *City* 15.3–4 (2011): 470.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996): 158.

City to a particular, previously marginalized social group... would contradict the pursuit of locating the Right to the City within a democratic framework.”⁷⁴ If this is the case, then it would seem that nothing can intercept the cycle of inequality from reproducing itself since “there is nothing to prevent those with political power and financial means to also shape the urban space according to their needs.”⁷⁵ In an urban political community where all urban dwellers have equal rights to participate and appropriate, there is no obvious means for adjudicating conflicting claims.⁷⁶ As a result, the cycle of power means that the inequality produced by urbanization continues. Thus, the question of producing a new ordering of equality remains while persistent instability is conventionally maintained.

What then becomes evident in Lefebvre’s right to the city are two problematic conditions for urban citizenship: the first is that, despite writing in a time when he found utility in organizing along working class lines, such rights are typically limited to working class urban inhabitants who are emphasized as the predominant political actor, where political struggle assumes a distinctly anti-capitalist resistance agenda. Second, it replaces the ideal of the state with the urban as the new dominant site through which

⁷⁴ Anna Plyushteva, "The Right to the City and Struggles over Urban Citizenship: Exploring the links," *Amsterdam Social Science* 1.3 (2009): 92.

⁷⁵ Mark Purcell, "Excavating Lefebvre: The Right to the City and its Urban Politics of the Inhabitant," *GeoJournal* 58.2–3 (2002): 106

⁷⁶ The issue of primitive accumulation raises questions concerning the precise meaning of ‘right’ used in Lefebvre’s work. Is Lefebvre advocating a right in the legal positivist sense? Or a world in which there is no judicial branch? The right to the city, as Peter Marcuse states, “is a moral claim, founded on fundamental principles of justice”. As he continues, “[r]ight is not meant as a legal claim enforceable through a judicial process today...rather, it is multiple rights that are incorporated”, meaning that citizenship is not only a right to vote, but also to a right to entry and protection, and to a status that encompasses multiple rights within the rights of the singular category of citizenship. See Marcuse, “Whose Right (s) to What City?,” 35.

political community is defined and rights are claimed, and in this sense, risks reproducing the inequalities of rights in an attempt at universalizing them.⁷⁷ As Purcell puts it:

[O]ne might still be part of a national community, but since one can equally inhabit the city regardless of nationality, urban inhabitation must come first in defining political community. The right to the city would thus advocate an alternative set of scalar interrelationships, arguing for an urban-hegemonic vision of political membership in addition to a national-hegemonic one.⁷⁸

This leaves some crucial questions unanswered, namely: how could an urban citizenship be granted through the right to the city be fully separate from state nationality?⁷⁹ As Purcell argues, “the struggle over which scale is dominant in determining political inclusion is important because that scale delineates the inside and the outside of political membership.”⁸⁰ This point gains salience especially when it is not clear what the perimeters of those city rights are. Claiming a right to the city and urban citizenship appears as a singular demand, a condition for becoming political that reproduces a desire to “create [one’s] own center,” and to participate in the economic structures of production that lead to urbanization in the first place.⁸¹ A number of important questions arise with respect to the right to the city. What is at stake in attempts to construct new forms of citizenship within the state? What would a closer look at the “modernizing” processes of capital growth in relation to urbanization and citizenship reveal about the propensity to reiterate statist ideals of political community at the urban scale?

⁷⁷ Mark Purcell, “Excavating Lefebvre: The Right to the City and its Urban Politics of the Inhabitant,” *GeoJournal* 58.2–3 (2002): 106.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Merrifield, “The Right to the City and Beyond: Notes on a Lefebvrian Re-Conceptualization,” 470.

In ‘the right to the city,’ we hear a series of opposing claims. While protecting an interest in constructing and enjoying the urban commons, it asserts a claim to something that cannot be possessed.⁸² It confounds, as Margaret Kohn argues, “the categories of public and private, individual and state, use and ownership.”⁸³ Indeed, Lefebvre’s theorization of the power of the working class in the urban, though not always directly connected, echoes many theorists’ claims in this thesis: that those who claim their right to the city also claim a right to become political. For Lefebvre, the right to the city is believed to be an effective alternative that “challenges national citizenship as the dominant basis for political membership”, whereby becoming political through gaining membership in a political community under exclusive urban governance, ultimately means becoming an urban citizen.⁸⁴ While this is a compelling starting point for critiquing and dismantling the dominant notion of citizenship, my central argument here is that a fundamental logic of exclusion precludes other marginalized, oppressed identities and those seeking a greater access to democratic politics through the city, while a claim to ‘becoming political’ in the city needs to be rethought in terms of why, exactly, it is the domain of the city that ought to determine and constitute our political subjecthood.

The self-constitution of political subjectivity has been of similar concern to scholars studying the disruptive acts of subjects within urban political communities.⁸⁵

⁸² Margaret Kohn, *The Death and Life of the Urban Commonwealth*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 4.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 2.

⁸⁴ Mark Purcell, "Excavating Lefebvre: The Right to the City and its Urban Politics of the Inhabitant," *GeoJournal* 58.2–3 (2002): 105.

⁸⁵ See, in particular, James Holston, who presents a similar view in his theory of insurgent urban citizenship composed of noncitizens and the marginalized who contest their exclusions.

Jacques Rancière is not a theorist of urban citizenship per se, but of politics more generally. However, his interventions on the theme of urban politics have figured prominently in the literature, particularly where he distinguishes between police (the ordering mechanisms of social unity) and politics (the disruption of presupposed order.) The “political”, says Rancière, contains the principle of equality because it is the basis from which a particular political police ordering is challenged by those discounted in political processes.⁸⁶ In this context, urban citizenship is engaged in *becoming* political, namely, through claiming rights that have been denied or making efforts to change them into something beyond state citizenship as it exists now. The political, for him, is achievable through acts of claiming, or “acts of dissensus”, a demonstration in which those not counted as political subjects claim their right to be counted.⁸⁷ Through acts of dissensus, non-citizens “become” citizens by enacting a paradox of acting as though they have the legal rights they do not legally have.⁸⁸ In both cases, a processes of subjectification takes place, insofar as becoming a citizen means becoming a political subject, and *vice versa*. Acts of dissensus illuminate the idea that ordering necessarily needs re-ordering, in the sense that such acts lead towards the creation of new political subjects.

Rancière is interesting because his theory of politics offers a compelling attempt to thwart re-instantiations of the self-authorizing, judging individual in the state. In his

⁸⁶ Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 54.

⁸⁷ Jacques Rancière, “Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 103.2 (2004): 303, 304; Rancière defines dissensus as “an organization of the sensible in which there is no hidden reality underneath appearances, or a unique regime of presentation of the given imposing its self-evidence on everyone.” Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, 28.

⁸⁸ For a compelling historical example read from this line of thought, see Todd May’s Rancierian analysis of the Civil Rights movement: Todd May, *Political Thought of Jacques Rancière: Creating Equality* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

model, there is no distinct, pre-constituted subject who stands outside politics, judging and then deciding to act. Nor is there is a final goal towards which free subjects are directed, but rather a presupposition of equality as the basis from which they are already acting. Rancière avoids the re-inscriptions of the state by asserting a politics that “makes visible that which had no reason to be seen.”⁸⁹ Through this rationale, he develops a notion of democracy that is not a political regime, but the very constitution of an “institution of politics”—“of both its subject and its mode of relating.”⁹⁰ Disrupting the police order on the basis of equality is, as Todd May’s reading of Rancière suggests, “the only real meaning that can be attached to the term *democracy*... Democracy is the practice of ‘politics,’ it is the expression of the logic of equality through its assertion by those who have been told, for one reason or another, that they have no part in the determination of their lives.”⁹¹

Rancière’s theory of politics thus highlights a valuable route for conceiving democracy as independent from rightful demands for inclusion, as a self-constitution of “a part that has no part” which manifests itself by disrupting the partition of the sensible through actions based on the presupposition of equality, which for him, is a non-statist concept. In this way, politics involves the co-creation of a political subject, not on a pre-determined set of criteria of equality, but a pre-supposition of it.⁹² Indeed, as Todd May argues, Rancière’s basis of equality has an element that is rarely invoked: solidarity.⁹³

⁸⁹ Jacques Rancière, Rachel Bowlby, and Davide Panagia. "Ten Theses on Politics," *Theory & Event* 5, no. 3, 2001, 10.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 5.

⁹¹ May, *Political Thought of Jacques Rancière: Creating Equality: Creating Equality*, 33.

⁹² *Ibid*, 25.

⁹³*Ibid*.

Yet, by presupposing equality, Rancière risks reproducing the statist form of rights as it is not clear how these practices or particular understandings of equality would play out in the concrete. This raises questions on the presupposition of the existence of a police order to sustain these claims to equality, and hence that what follows must be rooted in the police order that succeeds the one disrupted politically, expressed as the new form of the state.

§1.4: Global City as Relational Ontology

As part of a wider attempt to reconfigure state citizenship through the right to the city, though in more ontological terms, a myriad of work has been done by ‘post-structuralist geographers’, some of whom suggest that a relational perception of place is the route towards a new non-statist urban politics.⁹⁴ For instance, Doreen Massey situates herself in the Marxist stream of thought and attempts to think through anti-essentialist terms in her analysis of space/society relations. A key concept and main contribution of her work concerns the relational construction of space and place as well as how the city is an active agent in the construction of identities against capitalist globalization. In doing so, she argues for the notion that all relations are mutually constituted. Hence, the lines cut between local/global, place/space, and city/world must be rejected. Massey presents a nuanced argument that these terms have been untenably mapped onto the concrete/abstract, suggesting instead that the global is just as concrete as the local.⁹⁵ She

⁹⁴ See, in particular: Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, (London: Verso, 1989); Jones, Martin. "Phase Space: Geography, Relational Thinking, and Beyond," *Progress in Human Geography* 33.4 (2009): 487-506; Jon Murdoch, *Post-Structuralist Geography: A Guide to Relational Space* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage), 2005.

⁹⁵ Massey, Doreen B. *For Space*, (Thousand Oaks, Calif; London: Sage, 2006), 184.

encourages viewing the city as a “place” where we can be “at home” in the “world.”⁹⁶ Conceiving political space in terms of relational openness, she claims, offers an alternative of urban democratic practice (e.g. negotiations and contestations) as opposed to the more exclusive decision-making power of the vertically hierarchical state. Her solution is an “outward-looking” politics, an openness to thinking everything as “connected”, which prompts awareness of our impact on a world that too often seems beyond our immediate space-times. This openness involves an “ethics” of hospitality, which she insists is necessary for engaging with global urbanization. Like Lefebvre, she speaks about urban engagement in primarily economic terms: “From here run practices of engagement—investment, trading, dealing, disinvestment, exchange.”⁹⁷ In coming to terms with the inevitable political and economic change presented by globalization and capital growth, such an openness and ethics would, for her, initiate a reconceptualization of social space not only as always “multiple”, “changing”, and “becoming” urban, but also as an openness to such becoming, (e.g. to “urbanization”).⁹⁸ When considering Massey’s vision, a question that arises is: what is lost and what is gained politically within a relational ontology under urbanization?

⁹⁶ Massey, Doreen B. *For Space*, (Thousand Oaks, Calif; London: Sage, 2006), 155;. One might recall a topological view here, which suggests that power operates less in visible top-down forms, and more so in horizontal connectivity and networks. Here, reach refers to the extent of governmental power not only in distance, but intensity as it becomes more embedded in private and public arrangements. See: John Allen and Allan Cochrane, “Assemblages of State Power: Topological Shifts in the Organization of Government and Politics, *Ibid.*, 1073–1074.

⁹⁷ Massey, Doreen B. *For Space*, (Thousand Oaks, Calif; London: Sage, 2006), 190.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 192; See also Murray Bookchin, who examines the future relationship between cities and citizenship in an era of rapid urbanization in order to pose a solution based on principles of social ecology. Murray Bookchin, Murray. *Urbanization Without Cities: The Rise and Decline of Citizenship*, Vol. 171. (Montreal: Black Rose Books Ltd, 1992) xxvi; Notably, other thinkers, such as Allen and Cochrane offer both a relational and “topological” account of power which maintains hierarchy, yet a reconfigured version that emphasizes its power in terms of “reach”, not height.

Upon closer examination, Massey's relational ontology of politics appears somewhat conditional. In her attempt to fuse the abstract concept of "space" into a tangible notion of "place", the relational global city is maintained throughout as the necessary starting point for countering the homogenizing and depoliticizing processes of urbanization. Accordingly, Massey invites readers to rethink space as relational. Relationality, she posits, becomes a "condition of possibility for politics", where relationships are characterized by an openness, yet politics remains limited by accounts of a "pregiven, certain future, and a pre-given, closed space."⁹⁹ In this sense, an ontology of relationality is maintained as the pre-given future, whereas the global city is a predetermined closed space, an ontological precondition for becoming political. What Massey calls for is an openness to encounters with others and an "ethics of care" and "hospitality" to all, yet this emerges as an appeal to an ontological ideal, claimed as the condition for the political.

Moreover, thinking alternative ways of being political that move beyond the limits of political authority and challenge its practices of territorial border fixity is not a simple task; it does not always work through the daily political practices in ways that the nebulous networks of cities do.¹⁰⁰ Even with a shift towards Massey's vision of a more 'pluralistic' government and a more spatial vocabulary which captures the re-scaling of the state in 'non-horizontal' ways, the territorial fixity of the state does not change much; as John Allen and Allan Cochrane aptly put it:

⁹⁹ Doreen Massey, *For Space*, (Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE, 2006), 190.

¹⁰⁰ John Allen, and Allan Cochrane, "Beyond the Territorial Fix: Regional Assemblages, Politics and Power." *Regional Studies* 41, no. 9 (2007): 1162.

While a focus on territoriality may not necessarily imply the existence of fixed and stable foundation in many respects the vocabulary has remained trapped within a framework that attempts to identify new territorial settlements, even if the size and nature of the territories has changed...with some suggesting that city-regions may provide the basis for a new territorial political fix, albeit with ‘fuzzy’ boundaries and through the building of ‘coalitions for change’ rather than the creation of new institutions through structural reform.¹⁰¹

Indeed, inattention to power conceals the concrete, yet often confounding ways that state sovereignty works through governmentalizing practices, such as regional institutions and the conflicts among various claims to autonomous self-determination. If political practices are about the spaces formed by merged social relations, then would the maintenance of such spatial practices (despite the apparent openness to change since, for Massey, they are not controlled by a higher state authority) not require at least some institutional mechanism to ensure there was a space for the continual practice of pursuing clear political goals? In this sense, reconceptualising political space as conditionally relational, and without addressing the specificities of the political relations, raises a host of questions that Massey does not seem to address, such as whose logic will sustain the system, and who will ensure that the ordering mechanism will maintain political justice.

A crucial point raised in these readings is that if the political processes underlying global urbanization overlook elements of statist power, then “urbanization becomes an encounter with the possibility, necessity, and impossibility of politics.”¹⁰² My point here is that the possibility of being a political actor in the city is both conditioned and presupposed in these accounts, which raises the questions of where and how politics is to occur in the face of urbanizing forces. How can urban politics occur without reproducing

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 1162.

¹⁰² Ibid, 341.

insurgent particularisms or offering rationales for political withdrawal? In exploring such questions, I follow Tedesco's rejection of ontological claims about what politics is (e.g. relations and the governing of those relations) and where it can exist (e.g. in the global city). I am particularly skeptical about the specific kinds of ordering and governing within processes of urbanization and how they remain concealed in appeals to a relational ontology. I am also concerned with how solutions to the failures of urban democracy congeal to form what conflicting claims in the literature as a whole call "urban citizenship."

§1.5: Thinking Beyond the State: Problems

This brief sketch of some of the literature on urban citizenship highlights valuable and provocative re-articulations of citizenship, most of which I cannot hope to do justice to in the space of this thesis. The normative assumption of citizenship these views challenge is that there can only be nation-state citizenship. In doing so, a series of efforts emerge to reconstitute the analytic bracketing of the "citizen" within an urban scale that is separate from the state. The concerted claim is for universal rights, where individuals, despite the differing struggles to which they stake claims (as immigrants, the working class, global citizens, etc.), appeal to an egalitarian universality that encompasses difference. Yet, in the overview of the literature I have provided above, we hear recurring claims: in Bauböck, Lippert, Lefebvre and Massey either demands for a politics of inclusion presupposes a separation and insurgence of particular groups excluded from the city's political processes, or the specificities of governing processes go unaddressed. In conceiving urban citizenship as enfranchisement or as "practices of protection", for example, urban citizenship is depicted as inclusion into a political community based on

rights claims of the marginalized. The notion of entering an autonomous political community of the city is thrown into question by the idea that the ability to make and recognize claims is as, Lippert, Bagelman and Squire suggest, limited by a distinctively statist logic of acceptance and control, which I examine further in Chapters 2 and 3. Can a right to the city be possible without demanding a right for inclusion or reproducing exclusion?

In the global cities literature, scholars such as Massey concede that becoming a citizen of the global city requires adopting a relational ontology, but the resulting analysis often veers towards depoliticizing relations between atomized individuals, and thus fails to address the concealed structures of statist power both within and around those relations. Thinking of everything as ‘connected’, she argues, “reminds us of our impacts on things that seem beyond the momentary space-time we inhabit”, yet she is quick to stress the dangers of this particular thinking since it can project the ideal of “an always already constituted holism”.¹⁰³ While she claims there are, in fact, drawn lines, what these lines are, and how much they distinguish the different territorial flows and networks in her relational model, and indeed, the concepts of place and space themselves, remain unclear. Her point that we must constantly take responsibility for boundaries, definitions and categorizations of these lines, and understand that “every time we define something we are in our conceptual lives drawing a line” is taken well when situated in her call for a politics of responsibility for one’s implication in a context.¹⁰⁴ However, her idea that

¹⁰³ Massey, Doreen, *For Space*, (Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE, 2006), 107.

¹⁰⁴ Massey, Doreen, et al. "The Possibilities of a Politics of Place Beyond Place? A conversation with Doreen Massey." *Scottish Geographical Journal* 125.3-4 (2009): 417

notion of a politics of space that challenges the fixity of state boundaries in favour for an open mutable sense of place as a way to access the infinite possibilities spaces for political engagement could be furthered by an analysis of the specific boundaries she seeks to address.

For Lefebvre, who takes a more radical approach, urban citizenship points towards the global city as the center stage from which politics occurs, contending that uniting the divided city through urban citizenship will overcome the democratic deficiency of the state triggered by urbanization. He presents the urban as the basis for the formation and growth of the capitalist class. Yet, the urban becomes precisely the idealized plane from which this class is contested. This line of thought suggests that, paradoxically, the urban is the very solution to its own outgrowth (urbanization) in the sense that it is the site where a “novel” political community of urban citizens becomes relocated apart from the state scale. In Massey, urban citizenship is a matter of adopting a relational ontology of the city. However, her alternative form of politics does not specify the power relations at hand, nor the governing of those relations and their implications for her proposed ontology. Despite these careful investigations into how best practices of citizenship outside the state can respond to urbanization, sovereign politics keeps folding back into the picture. In the literature on urban citizenship, we are presented with a set of solutions to nation-state citizenship involving “rights claims” to “political membership” in the urban, two ideas that are intrinsically state-centric and reinforce sovereign politics; yet, locating politics in a relational ontological domain obfuscates the series of other power structures, identities, and contexts that shape those relations. The problem with each of these terms is, as Warren Magnusson puts it, that “there is always a presumed

sovereign center from which people are governed, the problem is to find it.”¹⁰⁵

For this reason, I wish to question the call for rights in the city as part of the groundwork for attempts to decenter the dominant ontology of the state and the dichotomous logics through which it reveals itself. This tendency, as I have shown, is overlooked largely in these approaches. The lack of theorization of sovereignty’s presence, I will show, is often concealed in the boundary-forming political logic of transition narratives to which demands for inclusion are made, a movement (e.g. urbanization) from some pre-modern, or modern-time, to some more idealized, projected future: urbanism.¹⁰⁶ What we need, I suggest, is to come to terms with the boundary effects produced by logics of sovereignty that invariably bleed into these analyses in order to better understand the limits of urban citizenship found within the literature.

§1.6: What Follows

While I do not think that these approaches are wrong, I suggest that they are more restrictive. These approaches, I argue, tend to shut down the possibility of urban citizenship rather than open it up, not least because there is an implicit assumption that it must occur within its own autonomous political domain. Attempts to evade exclusionary politics either face the problem of sovereign decisions to include/exclude or they obscure the lens through which we observe and understand the predetermined shape of that domain.¹⁰⁷ They conceal all other possibilities for enacting new political subjectivities

¹⁰⁵ Warren Magnusson, “The Symbiosis of the Urban and the Political,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38.5 (2014): 1572.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 332.

¹⁰⁷ Chantal Mouffe cautions the implications of a similar line of thought, when she argues that there is a double movement of inclusion/exclusion in Schmitt, where, in his critique of liberalism, he produces a “false dilemma” in which “either there is unity of the people, and this requires expelling every division and

and ontologies in ways that do not conform to the overarching regulative ideal of the state and of neoliberal governance from a distance, ways in which subjects can work creatively to mutate the state from within. That being said, what would it take to engage in a non-statist politics of the urban? How might we demand a right to the city in the Lefebvrian sense, or, as Rancière says, ‘become political’ without being reduced to mere noise? How can we be made visible and audible in the city without reifying it through power structures that privilege certain rights? What sort of categories do we need to identify the challenges posed by urbanization without imposing or withdrawing from the statist trap? What is at stake in attempts to make claims about an urban political community intelligible, yet not dependent upon the state to decipher that intelligibility? What is detected in these approaches when one looks more closely at the etymology of the terms “urban” and “citizenship”?

In what follows is a reading of the logics of these concepts as “boundary practices” for analyzing why there are contradictory processes at work in the accounts above. An analysis of these processes, I will show, helps uncover some of the continuities and discontinuities of contemporary political narratives which tend to limit accounts of urban citizenship.¹⁰⁸ By undergoing such an investigation, it becomes clear that the equivocations of both concepts ‘urban’ and ‘citizenship’ are distinctive features of sovereignty itself. These boundaries, I will suggest, are caught up in complex and

antagonism outside the demos—the exterior it needs if it is to establish its unity; or some forms of divide inside the demos are considered legitimate, and this will lead inexorably to the kind of pluralism which negates political unity and the very existence of the people”. This is a valid point which highlights the unstable tendencies of this logic for theories of urban citizenship problematized by the limits of the concept of a sovereignty that results in the precise scenario indicated above. Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), 54, 57.

¹⁰⁸ Delacey Tedesco, “Begin Again, Return Again: The Transition Narratives and Political Continuities of Global Urbanization,” *International Political Sociology* 9, no. 1 (2015): 106.

contradictory claims inherited from political theory which rely on untenable ruptures between nature/culture and savage/civilized.

Chapter II: Homo Urbanicus: Citizenship, Urbanization, Aporia

“The story often seems confused; it is not always coherent; it speaks of strange powers and numerous metamorphoses; it is also cruel, savage, and pitiless, but at times it also provokes laughter. It names things unknown, beings never seen. But those who have gathered together understand everything, in listening they understand themselves and the world, and they understand why it was necessary for them to come together, and why it was necessary that this be recounted to them.”¹⁰⁹

— Jean-Luc Nancy

“The central point of the work of art is the work as origin, the point which cannot be reached, yet the only one which is worth reaching.”¹¹⁰

— Maurice Blanchot

The category ‘urban citizenship’ expresses a synchronization of two difficult problems: urbanization and citizenship. Accounts of urban citizenship are modelled both as an alternative form of citizenship that can exist outside the domain of the state as well as a re-scaling of state governing power to the level of the city. In these accounts, claims about how politics *should* be in terms of its constituent relations, the governing of those relations, and the location of those relations evoke a series of conceptual boundaries for ordering and making sense of the world. That is to say, new political subjectivities are often made around privileging the identity of the autonomous self or the modern, liberal governing state against which all other political possibilities fall subordinate. My view is that, when the forms of governance are not overlooked, they tend to be bound within a trap of statist regeneration because of a conceptual split between nature and culture that is contrived by state sovereignty, which then, as the combined concept called “urban citizenship,” idealizes their unification through the same, yet reconfigured, construction

¹⁰⁹ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, trans. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1991), 44.

¹¹⁰ Blanchot, Maurice, *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (France: U of Nebraska Press), 2015, 54.

of boundaries. This poses limits on their adequacy as solutions to state-based citizenship, as sovereign reproductions of these splits continuously resurface. Both the terms, 'urban' and 'citizenship', I argue following Derrida, are aporetic in the sense that their conditions of possibility entail the impossibility of their unification; that is to say, they entail impossible possibilities wherein becoming urban requires cancelling out the rural, which means destroying the distinction that makes the urban, urban, and citizenship as a universal attainment would similarly abolish the distinction between citizenship and non-citizenship. Both equally face serious challenges for overcoming the democratic exclusion in an urbanizing city that is entangled within facets of governmentality without producing the dualisms expressed by a Schmittian logic of sovereignty. My central argument in this chapter, then, is that "urbanism" and "citizenship" function as twinned aporetic logics that rely on divisions (e.g. between nature/culture, rural/urban) from which there cannot be any final, non-statist solution to the question of urban citizenship.

To defend my claims, I will first examine how the concept of citizenship emerged as an authorization of boundaries constructed between nature and culture, universal and particular in early Greek articulations of ideal political community. Second, I show how this has led to simple, yet powerful dualisms, that conflate the distinctions within these, ones that problematize the universalizing image of state citizenship. Third, I will argue that the concept of the urban operates as an aporetic logic parallel to citizenship, dependent on historical demarcations between nature/rural and culture/urban, temporal (past/future) as well as spatial (urbanized/un-urbanized). These boundaries are inherently

unstable¹¹¹, causing the moment when one attempts to “become” urban as a non-statist “citizen” to immediately regenerate sovereign ideals. This reveals the complexity of the problem of sovereignty through which its intrinsically boundary line drawing practice is inescapable from modern conceptions of citizenship and urbanism.

§2.1: Early Tracings of Aporia

‘Aporia’, literally translating to “without passage”, emerged among the pre-Socratic philosophers, notably Heraclitus of Ephesus (535–475 BC). One of his famous statements, “I went in search of myself,” as Charles Kahn writes, “is as straightforward a paradox as any in Heraclitus. Normally, one goes looking for *someone else*. How can I be the object of my own search? This will make sense only if myself is somehow absent, hidden, or difficult to find.”¹¹² Indeed, Heraclitus’s dictum prompts readers of the difficulty with which we are met when seeking knowledge about ourselves, whether thought as residing in a world hidden in oneself, or one created by oneself. He speaks about this difficulty using a language of ‘dualisms’ and ‘opposites’, observes that are nevertheless singular (e.g. night and day are one and the same; rivers can never be stepped into twice, yet are always the same river; the way up is no different than the way down). Kahn recognizes the presupposition of the idea of “searching for oneself” and Heraclitus’s language of contradiction as an expression of self-alienation: “self-knowledge is difficult because man is divided from himself; he presents a problem for himself to resolve.”¹¹³ Similarly, Ernst Cassirer remarks that “Nature, as an object of

¹¹¹ My use of the term “inherent” here is used in contrast with “extrinsic” because the former preconditions the latter, which is expressed, as I briefly touched upon in chapter 1, on the extrinsic reproduction of sovereignty in models of urban citizenship.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid, 117-118.

knowledge, of thought and inquiry, is given to man only when he has learned to draw a dividing line between it and his own world of subjective feeling.”¹¹⁴ The function of this conceptual and aesthetic *boundary-line* figures crucially in what I would like discuss in this chapter. Specifically, an analysis of this phenomenon in a brief genealogy of both concepts is helpful in gaining critical purchase on the boundary logics of contemporary sovereign politics in accounts of urban citizenship, as revealed through the twin processes underlying citizenship and urbanism. For the purpose of this paper, I will begin in chronological order starting with the former.

§2.2: Aporia of Citizenship: Nature/Culture, Polis

Early expressions of aporia, albeit not limited to this, are most conspicuous in the division of nature and culture in the early Greek visions of citizenship. As Giorgio Agamben observed: “Aristotle may well have given the most beautiful formulation to the aporia that lies at the foundation of Western politics,”¹¹⁵ referring to his famous phrase “*politikon zōon*”, in which the human is, by nature, a “political animal.”¹¹⁶ Aristotle’s seemingly simple phrase signifies his diagnosis of the purpose of political life, in which, unlike animals, the human is born with an ability to distinguish just from unjust, matters to be deliberated in the *Agora*.¹¹⁷ This nature/human distinction is acutely discerned through his rendering of the *polis*, which he regards as a thing of nature, not merely as

¹¹⁴ Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms By Ernst Cassirer*, trans. Ralph Manheim. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 451.

¹¹⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign power and Bare Life*, trans. Heller Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 13.

¹¹⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Kitchener, Ont: Batoche Books, 1999), 5.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

utility to satisfy the exigencies of bare life, but geared towards the “good” life.¹¹⁸ This point is vindicated against those who are lawless, savage and hence more animal-like as those without justice to emphasize that what separates animals and political animals, is the state.¹¹⁹ For Aristotle, in order to become a cultured, civilized citizen, one must necessarily become political.

The condition for political life is depicted as a natural passage from nature to culture, understood as a transition from the animal to the human of the city, “homo urbanicus.” Agamben refers to this move as a distinction between *zoē* and *bios*, two terms that share the same etymological root meaning of “life”,¹²⁰ the latter referring to the “living” shared by all living things (e.g. plants, animals, humans) except barbarians and gods, the former denoting a specific classification of living unique to a specific group or individual.¹²¹ This distinction expresses a split between natural life and political community life, between natural life and civilized life, and between the excluded and included.

The division in the category “people” results in an aporia of the problem of constituting a political body. The establishment of human species into political life is formulated through a division between “bare life (people) and political existence (People)”, otherwise referred to as a division between *zoē* and *bios* despite that the notion “people” “is what it already is.”¹²² The image of political community, in other words, is

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 6.

¹²⁰ Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 9.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid, 100.

defined against the backdrop of what a “natural” people is. As Agamben explains: “The ‘people’ thus always already carries the fundamental biopolitical fracture within itself. It is what cannot be included in the whole of which it is a part and what cannot belong to that in which it is always already constituted.”¹²³ Therefore the very notion of “people”, the citizens of a political community is something that is not only “always already” given in its natural species form, but something that also must be “realized” through continuous redefining and purification “through exclusion, language, blood, and land.”¹²⁴ In this sense the notion of “people” is temporary; it works until it reaches an impasse from which it must negate itself in order to *be*, while the excluded notion of “people” is inherently implicit in the very body from which it is excluded.¹²⁵ In other words, the concept “People” conflates the natural difference that is carried within its own meaning and borders, against a backdrop of its “natural” animal counterpart. At first glance, this line of thinking may appear deceptively simple, perhaps even so obvious as to seem redundant. In actuality, as I will show, this is precisely the seductiveness of aesthetically simplistic dualisms. What is obscured, I will explain shortly, is the ongoing erection and erasure of boundaries between insides and outsides within their own conceptual and physical borders.

The division of life as a prerequisite for political order, depends on an additional element: the *city*, which emerged in early modern political thought as mutually intertwined with citizenship. Aristotle’s articulation of political order as fundamentally tied to the city is made clear when he states that “Our object is to discover the best form

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

of government, that, namely under which a city will be best governed.”¹²⁶ The shift from nature to culture in the *politicization* of animals typically fixes a certain spatiotemporality that is conditioned by a process of *urbanization*. This process is expressed in the spatial dimension of political organization that delimits its geographical territory (e.g. the ancient Greek city of Athens) which in turn seeks to crystallize the identity of the political community through time. That political order depends on a perceived spatiotemporal stability of the city suggests that becoming political as a citizen of the *polis* is conditioned by becoming urban (e.g. being in the city) insofar as it involves a move from nature to the *polis*, and hence to citizenship, civilization and order. For Aristotle, this is marked by the moment from when the city is “self-sufficing” to permit advancement to the ideal purpose of state formation: happiness, justice, wisdom, perfection.¹²⁷ This foundation will enable “the natural beginning of the subject,” which for him, must be a common place; namely, the city, since “the constitution is a community, and must at any rate have a common place—one city will be in one place, and the citizens are those who share that one city.”¹²⁸ This early formulation of the Western body politic demonstrates a connection to the process of urbanization in the city. As Bryan Turner suggests, “[b]ecause the city state was the urban and rational context for debate and contest, we discover the etymological roots of citizenship in the notion of the *civis civitas*.”¹²⁹ In the romance languages, he continues, “*citoyen*” is inextricably linked with the city, alluding to the connection between “the idea of ‘to civilize’ and ‘to

¹²⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 170.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 24; 149-150.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 22

¹²⁹ Bryan Turner, *Max Weber: From history to modernity* (London: Routledge, 2002), 257.

citizenize' that is to create a socio-cultural environment in which rational discourse could take place over the proper ends of political power".¹³⁰ Moreover, as Adams points out, "[c]iudad, rooted in the Latin word *civic* and related to *civitas*, expresses a legal and political status of citizenship, which, like the term *polis*, privileges a political form of coexistence. The term *ciudad*, thus, implied the notion of a highly symbolic space whose meaning and form follow from the political concept."¹³¹ The aporia underlying this early form of urban citizenship, however, reveals fundamental limits to the certainty or stability of its ontology

The simplistic dualism of nature/culture, inside/outside in the urbanizing process of citizenship, and hence at the constructed origins of modern political founding, entails a continual instability of the category citizenship. Since the Greeks, the scope of the statist category 'citizen' has increased in scope to include differences, in response to rising pressures of various intersectional claims (e.g. ethnic, gender, social, cultural, ecological.) In doing so, threats to the perceived inner harmony of citizenship are eclipsed by an image of a valorized attunement of citizenship that strives to diminish difference by obfuscating a series of problematic distinctions. This image, however, is far from natural and exists as a "strategic" invention of tradition, as Engin Isin claims.¹³² Such inventions raise interesting and important questions for scholars like Isin, who ask: "Would it not be more revealing to problematize the margins or the points of contact

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ross Adams, "Natura Urbans, Natura Urbanata: Ecological Urbanism, Circulation, and the Immunization of Nature," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 32, no. 1 (2014): 18.

¹³² Engin Isin, *Being political: Genealogies of Citizenship* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2002), 3.

where the inside and outside encounter, confront, destabilize, and contest each other?”¹³³ Indeed, what is often taken for granted in the term “citizenship” is the scope and breadth of how, exactly, the extant ideal of citizenship is not only challenged by the political construction of an inside/outside, but by emerging categories from inside its own territory.¹³⁴ Within its boundaries, three levels of distinction which challenge the dominant dualistic categories of the state (e.g. as civilized/uncivilized, inside/outside) through various claims can be highlighted. First, there is a theoretical demarcation presupposed by the state, between our own polis and the other ones within the system of states, giving rise to an ‘us vs. them’ narrative. Second, there is a distinction between citizens and the others who inhabit the city, but are not ‘legally’ citizens (e.g. undocumented migrants). Third, there is a distinction between citizens themselves, as those who have rights against the state, and those who have a duty to obey the state. These distinctions, concealed by claims of a universal humanity with an equal right to citizenship made possible by the city and particularistic claims of political community, continuously refract off one another, for their unification would destabilize their categorical, antagonistic necessity

An aporia is expressed in the maintenance of these distinctions, which continuously struggle against longstanding attempts to define nature, and secure an ideal of political community with it. As such, the universal pretensions embodied by the category ‘citizenship’ are in constant tension with the diversity of social life.¹³⁵

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 4.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 463.

Citizenship is inherently defined through the exclusion of “other” social identities, “thereby undermining recognition of the alternative identities arising therefrom.”¹³⁶ The aporia emerges from this exclusion the moment that the construction of citizens involves making rights claims as to who is a “competent” political actor, alongside the notions about what consists in a “natural” social community.¹³⁷ Each version of citizenship tends to “rely heavily upon the assumption of a pre-political constitution of a natural community of social actors.”¹³⁸ In this sense, citizenship rights involve claims to what constitutes the universal (e.g. the ‘natural’ community) and the particular (e.g. the individual needs that must be met, arguably as an a priori of the universal, or as a result of the universal) without ever being fully able to truly *know* what these variables are. The political logic of citizenship thus delineates citizens/non-citizens and subjects/citizens, only to be resolved by creating new boundaries between emergent claims and a need for sovereign security. Citizenship, then, requires continuous redefinition insofar as it takes shape through constant processes. In examining the claims to politics that arise from claims to security through citizenship, Anthony Burke writes, that “[t]his aporia occurs because despite their presumption to universality, realist structures of security have always argued that the security of the self (the individual, the nation, or the “way of life”) must be purchased at the expense of another.”¹³⁹

Through these divisions, and the struggles over defining the natural ideal of political community, the Kantian regulative ideal beckons: we “presume” the possibility

¹³⁶ Ibid. 464.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Anthony Burke, “Aporias of Security.” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 27, no. 1 (2002) 6.

of an ideal political community, and in this sense, we can never really have a finalized solution for the persistence of difference, since it is constantly subject to change. As Walker states,

Citizenship expresses the great hope that people can eventually become human precisely through their participation in particular states. This is the great hope expressed by Kant, the hope that we might be able to achieve a universality in the particular, to act on the basis of a universal law despite all our particularities.¹⁴⁰

The line between modern subjects and the sovereign politics that makes them possible in Kant's vision, is ultimately groundless, hence unstable and continuously challenged. At stake at this boundary-line between the universal/particular, between nature/culture, are continuous reformulations of citizenship, such as urban citizenship, to the exclusionary patterns of political community, in favor for some new, universalistic ideal. Yet this ideal gives rise to the tendency to construct new patterns of exclusion within the urban as soon as the words urban and citizenship gain any purchase.

Consequently, citizenship is brought into being through more than a founding sovereign decision that establishes a state in distinction to the state system; it concurrently manifests against natural life. In Early Greek articulations, the foundation of political order is rendered in terms of becoming civilized, yet this is intrinsically a process of urbanization. The aporia arising as a boundary-inducing effect of citizenship parallels the break between the concept of nature/culture underlying the concept of urbanization. Across a range of literature in Chapter 1, the concept "urban" is repeatedly expressed as both a site for, and a form of, non-statist citizenship. In this, it is presented

¹⁴⁰ R.B.J. Walker, "Both Globalization and Sovereignty: Re-Imagining the Political," in *Principled world politics: the challenge of normative international relations*, ed. Paul Wapner and Lester Edwin J. Ruiz (Oxford and Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 2000), 31.

as an alternative solution for dealing with a series of issues concerning economic, ecological, social and political inequality. The urban is idealized as an ‘external’ antidote to many of the problems that are said to originate in the modern state and re-inscribed in many of the same central tenets originating in the statist vision of an ideal political community: namely, as an ontological domain separate from nature and the state, which then idealizes its unification with them by moving from the state back to some natural, universal form of political community. The formation of an urban site as ‘distinct’ from the state enacts a series of problematic ruptures that claim a move from rural to urban, only to then return to some idealized origin, located on the other side of an inoperative fence staked between a modern vision of human/nature, culture/nature, and rural/urban clefts. The urbanization process rendering these categories unstable prompts remedies for urban citizenship to shift back and forth between them, dizzyingly transmuting them as problems, then back into solutions (to the urban as the ontological ideal).

§2.3: From Ancient Polis to Modern City: Urbanizing to Urbanism

While urbanization is understood as prefiguring political order, it simultaneously threatens it. Modern accounts of urbanization, as I will show in this section, contain a particular pattern that extends the function of this process from nature to culture—to culture driven towards infinite growth and expansion. This transition parallels early accounts of political order, where becoming political entailed much more than the state constitution, but as the life of political animals. Similarly, urbanism is expressed as a distinct way of life, transposed against a pre-modern and natural origin which becomes bracketed by its condition. I would first like to provide a brief sketch of the origins of the terms “urbanization” and “urban” which expresses the origins of the aporia of the

problem of urbanism. This aporia, I will show, is expressed through a repeated transposition between urban and nature that sustains the boundary between fabricated temporal (past/future, nature/culture) and spatial (rural/urban) conditions, which only reveal the difficulty of escaping sovereign politics.

In 1938, Louis Wirth proclaimed that “the beginning of what is distinctively modern in our civilization is best signaled by the growth of great cities”, an outlook from which he then pioneered the term “urbanism.”¹⁴¹ Whereas the term *urban*, originating from the Latin *urbs* meaning *city*, generally refers to a densely populated site of social production, Wirth advanced the derivative noun “urbanism” to describe “a way of life” in the city. On this view, Wirth articulates a way of conceiving urbanism beyond capitalist and technological growth processes. Wirth recognizes the tendency in which urbanism is regarded as a boundary line that neatly breaks with the smaller country and village-sized communities of the ‘rural’, “as a distinctive mode of human group life.”¹⁴² Still, he says, “nowhere has mankind been farther removed from organic nature than under the conditions of life characteristic of great cities.”¹⁴³ The reason for this, he provides, is that unlike natural/rural settings, the urban is:

a consequence of the concentration in cities of industrial and commercial, financial and administrative facilities and activities, transportation and communication lines, and cultural and recreational equipment such as the press, radio stations, theatres, libraries, museums, concert halls, operas, hospitals, higher educational institutions, research and publishing centers, professional organizations, and religious and welfare institutions.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Wirth, Louis. "Urbanism as a Way of Life." *American journal of sociology* 44.1 (1938): 1.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 4.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 2.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 5.

It is important to note that these processes did not emerge out of “instantaneous creation”, but as a result of earlier forms of human association originating in the rural countryside.¹⁴⁵ The concept ‘urbanization’ not only describes the liminality between the rural and the urban, but also the growth of the urban itself, in terms of its expansion and development. Urbanism is both a cause and an effect of urbanization insofar as its difference from the rural is determined by its so-called ‘distinctively modern way of life’, an ideal towards which it continuously drives itself, and processes of urbanization “are affected by and effect the urban mode of life.”¹⁴⁶ The division between the two terms is what Ross Adams calls a symmetry between “natural process and normative science,” centered on a “nearly theological faith in the human capacity for technology” that is energized by the arrival of a fundamental principle of a united humanity, “a realization of Kant’s notion of cosmopolitan purpose.”¹⁴⁷ However, both terms, as Adams claims, have come to denote a “naturalized background against which the ‘artifice’ of human inventiveness can take shape.”¹⁴⁸

The attraction of this ideal largely emanates from its promising possibilities for individual autonomy and self-sufficient gains and freedoms, with no obligation to close-knit rural communities.¹⁴⁹ Yet Wirth submits that it is important that urbanism not be mistaken with the “power-driven” machine technology, mass production, and capitalistic

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 3.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 20.

¹⁴⁷ Adams, "Natura Urbans, Natura Urbanata: Ecological Urbanism, Circulation, and the Immunization of Nature," 17.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 15.

¹⁴⁹ Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," 12.

enterprises of modern capitalism and industrialism.¹⁵⁰ The imaginary borderline between what we often think of as rural/nature and the urban/culture does not accurately capture the influence of the city because the city's influence extends well beyond its physical borders and its population in terms of its production and control over "economic, political and culture life that has drawn the most remote parts of the world into its orbit and woven diverse areas, peoples, and activities into a cosmos."¹⁵¹ In this way, categories such as urban/culture are distinct yet indistinguishable from rural/nature. Discontinuities between these categories, as Wirth's central point suggests, while in some respects acute, and even necessary for deciphering the meaning assigned to an urban form of life, are not always ascertainable to the observing theorist. This difficulty is expressed in articulations of urbanization as "both prepolitical and modern, natural and technological."¹⁵²

Robert Park describes urbanization as a process from which humans move from the "life of the open fields" towards a supposedly more modern ideal where individuals are more free to maximize their cultivation of potential through the sharing of culture, morals and aesthetic unity in the city.¹⁵³ This transition is not only a demographic change of population density, but a conceptual one, where individuals are said to be more civilized. Georg Simmel similarly remarks: "we follow the laws of our own nature—and this after all is freedom."¹⁵⁴ He evokes the ancient city of Athens to remind readers that the metropolis is where "the intellectual development of our species" occurred, tracing

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 7.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 20.

¹⁵² Ibid, 18.

¹⁵³ Robert Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Roderick Duncan McKenzie, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 4.

¹⁵⁴ Georg Simmel and Kurt H. Wolff, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), 420.

the condition for freedom that the city provides to today, where “metropolitan man is “free” in a spiritual and refined sense, in contrast to the pettiness and prejudices which hem in the small-town man.”¹⁵⁵ In the city, unlike the sprawling countryside, with its long distances and higher waiting times, hence greater time wasted, daily life occurs wherein

Punctuality, calculability, and exactness are forced upon life by the complexity and extension of metropolitan existence and are not only most intimately connected with its money economy and intellectualistic character. These traits must also...favor the exclusion of those irrational, instinctive, sovereign traits.¹⁵⁶

The urban is regarded here as a modernizing ideal in which freedom is said to be achievable through the efficient, orderly exactitude insofar as the city is a place that, as a metropolitan ideal, rejects those attitudes of the savage, rural, irrational and uncivilized

According to this view, urbanism as a way of life manifests according to an intrinsically divided modern vision where all life becomes calculated, ordered, and ‘made’ rational according to nature’s mathematical language. Describing the process of the rationalization of the urban, Simmel writes:

The calculative exactness of practical life which the money economy has brought about corresponds to the ideal of natural science: to transform the world into an arithmetic problem, to fix every part of the world by mathematical formulas ... Through the calculative nature of money a new precision, a certainty in the definition of identities and differences, an unambiguousness in agreements and arrangements has been brought about in the relations of life-elements—just as externally this process has been effected by the universal diffusion of pocket watches...Without the strictest punctuality in promises and services the whole structure would break down into an inextricable chaos.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 418.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 413.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 412.

The advent of the modern city is expressed here as a transition from rural/culture in the ancient *polis* to a more calculable growth machine wherein the city, mathematic calculability, punctuality and money become hallmarks. The ‘modern’ concept of the urban here is contingent on the Kantian ‘Copernican revolution’. The development of a formalized notion of urbanization came only a century after what Husserl called Galileo’s “mathematization of nature”, which became the causal law from which a Kantian a priori universal would then form.¹⁵⁸ During this time, space becomes a “fact” of nature, and therefore conquerable and orderable according to human rationality.¹⁵⁹ Urban modernism results in the reversal of the subjectivity of human senses to nature to vice versa.¹⁶⁰

Alexandre Koyré calls this shift the seventeenth century’s “destruction of the cosmos and infinitization of the universe” alluding to absolutist principles of closed space as opposed to the now open infinite space, and the move from contemplating nature to now taming and mastering it, expressed from Copernicus and Galileo to Newton.¹⁶¹ “The cities,” Max Weber well recognized, were “the carriers of this rationalism.”¹⁶² In the rise of modern urbanism, the urban expresses an attempt to order time and space according to the individual’s sovereign ideals; to try to converge the presence of the city with an idealized origin of an un-urbanized nature, and an idealized destination in finite space according to nature’s *telos*. Urbanization towards urbanism, in other words, becomes

¹⁵⁸ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 23.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 54.

¹⁶¹ Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 1-2.

¹⁶² Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 471.

paralleled to modernization towards modernity, and hence to civilization; of infinite spatial extension encompassing the totality of human experience. David Harvey describes the spatiotemporal conditions during this time, the Enlightenment, as contingent on the Renaissance's revolution in space and time and "the first great surge of modernist thinking" which "took the domination of nature as a necessary condition of human emancipation."¹⁶³ Time and space, or, "the annihilation of space through time" under what might be thought of as "the 'tyranny' of perspectivism", implying that the physical earth becomes fully calculable and divisible, raises questions such as: "from whose perspective is the physical landscape to be shaped?"¹⁶⁴ Max Weber's diagnosis of modernity characterizes the rise of new forms of subjectivity arising from the advent of the Occidental, medieval city to a degree much different than its classical "pre-modern" forbearers, where this individual rationalization of life culminates in "the disenchantment of reality, an irreversible development of bureaucratization, and a growing pluralization of values and beliefs."¹⁶⁵ This is the cosmic arrangement according to which we have come to order and govern our cities, and the urbanizing logic which permits such possibility.

§2.4: Aporia of Urbanization: Boundary Logics

The aporia is revealed in an analysis of the liminal boundary space separating urbanism as an origin from urbanism as a destination, its transit verb 'urbanization' maintaining antagonisms on every side between authorized and authorizer, subjects and

¹⁶³ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 249.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 258, 253.

¹⁶⁵ Turner, *Max Weber*, 7.

authority. Like citizenship, the bracketing of urbanism, in its origins, is marked by decisive points of fissure between nature/culture, as well as particularistic claims and universal ideals. Tedesco describes the boundaries between rural and urban, nature and culture established by urbanization as “practices governed by an aporetic logic” that maintains the distinction between these terms by continuously threatening them, resulting in a constant need for new boundaries between the two.¹⁶⁶ These practices are pervasive, not least in that urban and citizenship rely on conflicting configurations of boundaries between self-governance and sovereign authority, raising questions about “how the co-constitutive process is governed.”¹⁶⁷

The persistence of antagonisms indicates that urbanization does not merely denote the process of city growth as expressing a shift in spatiotemporal conditions towards freedom and a reign of rationality. It also marks an endeavor to ‘urbanize’ subjectivities by reconfiguring the political boundaries that uphold the statist spatiotemporal political order. Yet this reconfiguration demands a different analysis of the spatiotemporal political order of the state. As Magnusson suggests, “[t]o envision the world *through* the city and *as* a city is to see its constitutive relations and boundaries differently.”¹⁶⁸ To analyze the urban is to shift analyses from the urban within the state against a city of states, to the boundary from which urbanization delimits the rural from the urban,

¹⁶⁶ Tedesco, "The Urbanization of Politics: Relational Ontologies or Aporetic Practices?," 334.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 339.

¹⁶⁸ Warren Magnusson, *Seeing Like a State, Seeing Like a City*, (Victoria: Canadian Political Science Association 2008), 10

between culture and nature, or between culture and the “un-urbanized.”¹⁶⁹ As Magnusson puts it:

The frontier of the urban is not at the boundary between one state and the next; nor is it the boundary between state and society. Instead, it is at the boundary of the rural, the nature, or the un-urbanized: a boundary that can be understood both historically and geographically. At that boundary, questions of nature and culture are acutely contested. From one point of view, the city is understood as what civilizes us—transforms us from tribesmen or villagers into citizens—and what civilizes our environment—changes it into a safe, comfortable, but stimulating and interesting home for humans. From another point of view, the city alienates us from both nature and culture: despoils the environment even as it degrades the rich variety of cultures that give meaning to human life.¹⁷⁰

As the passage above suggests, the concept of the urban makes the very possibility of urbanization possible. The boundary of the urban delineates a space for possible movement between concepts of security/insecurity, civilized/savage, culture/nature, past/future. It is a boundary that makes the concept of urbanization a transition narrative between a ‘here’ to a ‘there’, from idealized origins (of nature) towards idealized destinations (the modern, civilized, urban form) and of politics and its limits possible (inside/outside).¹⁷¹ Without this boundary, these processes and antagonisms are impossible; yet it is the aporia which renders this boundary inherently transient, making it

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Warren Magnusson, *Seeing Like a State, Seeing Like a City*, (Victoria: Canadian Political Science Association 2008), 10

¹⁷¹ Zygmunt Bauman articulates a similar position in his view of ideals as the emerging “retrotopias”: visions located in the past, functioning as a “double negation” in the move from the formation of the city-state political community to the problematic ideal of progress through the privatization and individualization of citizens, back to the polis: “it is their turn to now be negated by what they valiantly and all but successfully attempted to negate”. He “derives stimulus from the hope of reconciling, at long last, security with freedom”. This is done by replacing the ideal of ultimate perfection “with the assumption of the non-finality and endemic dynamism of the order it promotes, allowing thereby for the possibility (as well as desirability) of an indefinite succession of further changes that such an idea *a priori* de-legitimizes and precludes”. Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia*, (Cambridge: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 2, 3.

both necessary and any unification, impossible.¹⁷² In this sense, the ontology of urbanism is enigmatic; it is, as suggested above, “what civilizes us, yet what alienates us from our own natures.”

The boundary between urbanism and the un-urbanized, rural, then, limits any attempt to move across its unbridgeable bridge: to change from one ontology to the other for a better, more democratic politics is to reproduce a regulative ideal to secure this distinction. The ‘boundary’ between urban/nature becomes threatened as soon one attempts to cross it—whether understood as a move from nature to culture, or, uncivilized to civilized (as in the *polis*, or early articulations of urbanism), or from a destructive urbanized way of life back to a more natural, idealized form of political community (e.g. urban citizenship). Moving from one domain to the other regenerates sovereign politics precisely at the moment when one thinks it has been overcome. These terms incite sovereign security, thereby echoing Harvey’s dictum that “[a]ttachment to a certain conception of space and time is a political decision.”¹⁷³

The aporia that produces the effect of the boundaries limits any finality of a *telos* (e.g. to become urban) from becoming complete, for the political stabilization of the ontology would be regulated according to the security of unity against its threats.¹⁷⁴ In Harvey’s observation, this boundary line becomes the central problem of capitalism insofar as “capitalism has to build a fixed space (or “landscape”) necessary for its own functioning at a certain point in its history only to have to destroy that space...at a later

¹⁷² Tedesco, "The Urbanization of Politics: Relational Ontologies or Aporetic Practices?," 334.

¹⁷³ David Harvey, "Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination1," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80.3 (1990): 432

¹⁷⁴ Tedesco, "The Urbanization of Politics: Relational Ontologies or Aporetic Practices?," 334.

point in order to make way for a new “spatial fix.”¹⁷⁵ Similarly, achieving “urban citizenship” insofar as the spatiotemporal categories of the state are merely regenerated at the level of the city is not possible. Claims of progressing towards a more “urban” way of life, whether forward through urbanization, or backwards (back to the *polis* from state citizenship) gives rise to an ongoing transposal of authority, not least in the rise of self-governing urban citizens outside the state. It resembles a problem Husserl identified, which reiterates the Kantian question about the purpose of the “becoming and being of modern sciences, of modern philosophy, and indeed of the spirit of modern European humanity in general.”¹⁷⁶ He writes,

Thus we find ourselves in a sort of circle. The understanding of the beginnings is to be gained fully only by starting with science as given in its present-day form, looking back at its development. But in the absence of an understanding of the *beginnings* the development is mute as a *development of meaning*. Thus we have no other choice than to proceed forward and back-ward in a zigzag pattern; the one must help the other in an interplay.¹⁷⁷

Similar to the way Husserl describes the absence of knowledge from beginnings, resulting in a dizzying search for it, fabrications of origins are pervasive in accounts of urbanism. The very concept of the urban originated as a distinction from rural/nature by its dense association, although the limits to that could not be measured by virtue of demographics. The boundary of the urban causes the moment when one attempts to “become” urban as a non-statist “citizen”, to shift, creating a need to secure, as seen in accounts of urban citizenship. What this tendency reveals is the profound complexity involved when trying to overcome the problem of sovereignty by appealing to reworked

¹⁷⁵ David Harvey, "Globalization and the Spatial Fix," *Geographische Revue* 2.3 (2001): 25.

¹⁷⁶ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. (Northwestern University Press, 1970): 58.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 58.

notions of ‘citizenship’ and more ‘natural’ forms of politics in the urban. Both concepts, as I have shown, are formed by political origins that would later ground the modern state and thus mirror the boundary line drawing practices inherent in the statist split between nature/culture and then the contradictory necessity for a sovereign security to resolve this split (e.g. by becoming urban again).

Processes of both citizenship and urbanization thus perform remarkably similar boundary practices. They work to secure a temporal fix for citizenship, and a spatial fix for capital processes, respectively. The ideal of the urban is modelled on modernizing narratives, but also creates a desire to reverse this modernizing trajectory due to the apparent political, economic, and social, culture destructiveness generated in the path of its growth. Hence, while urbanization is fundamentally required for citizenship, it is also one of its biggest threats. At the same time, while it is constructed as a category to describe what it means to be “modernized”, it is inherently a political concept, based on unknowable preconceptions of the purpose of human nature—to become free, modern, autonomous human beings. This becomes even more explicit when theorists trying to respond to problems of urbanization by “becoming” urban—something generated by the urban, by the regulative ideal of the state itself, for the meaning assigned to the urban as tied to citizenship is inextricably bound up with the statist categories that establish its subjectivities in the first place, and perpetuate the transition cycle

The aporia underlying the processes of citizenship and urbanism raises a series of questions, not least on whether claims to the validity of any political order can be posed as a remedy to the undecidability of the problems of state sovereignty with certainty. What the effects of the aporia reveal is the ultimate groundlessness on which claims to

the urban are made, claims which involve the threat of the urban becoming something else, something dangerous or disorderly which demands sovereign security.¹⁷⁸ At stake in claims to urban citizenship is thus “accepting these things, to pose the problem of politics in relation to that complexity, rather than in relation to the simplicity that sovereignty seeks.”¹⁷⁹ In this sense, urban citizenship is conditioned by the persistence of claims intrinsic to the ideal of political community that are made possible only through a sovereign decision. Posing as a solution by returning back to an ‘urban way of life’ determined by a community membership only repeats the conditions that inherently underpin capital growth and exclusion, as evidenced in the very meaning of these two concepts.

§2.5: Conclusion

As this chapter has argued, citizenship and urbanism both operate as aporetic logics that cannot be finalized (that is, they curb the possibility of becoming urban citizens) without regenerating the desire for sovereign security. In doing so, I first explained the aporetic logic of citizenship, dependent on a split between nature (rural/savage) and culture (the city-state/citizens), and historical desire to resolve the two by reconciling a universal ideal of the ultimate good cultivatable by the state and the particularistic desires of subjects. I then showed how this same logic underlies the concept of ‘urbanism’. Urbanism and citizenship are closely entwined, the former originated as a break with nature insofar as the city was conceived as a site to foster civilization and a way of life, as would later become defined by scholars like Wirth.

¹⁷⁸ Magnusson, Warren. *Politics of Urbanism: Seeing like a City*. New York: Routledge, (2013): 8.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

Since urbanism, however, is inherently constructed as an idea of growth and expansion (as it is always in the process of urbanization) it is inadequate to contrive it as a solution to the rationale behind this growth and expansion that is one of cultural mastery over nature. To become an ‘urban citizen’ is thus to move through a *telos* from the ideal of modernity, an ideal that culminated in the primal leap towards urban citizenship and interdicts finality to ‘becoming urban’.¹⁸⁰ The aporia appears when nature/culture is separated so as to claim politics as occurring in a specific location, such as the state or the city, only to then generate a desire to reconcile this divide, for fear of urban democratic erosion to urbanization, by returning to an idealized urban origin (e.g. urban citizenship). The boundaries separating these realms are both unstable and temporary, hence finality is not possible. The ultimate ‘ground’ of the urban, based on claims to knowing what ‘nature’ is and the ‘nature’ to which humans should be, is ultimately unknowable, hence the authority to define and securitize it, unstable. The importance of tracing the logic of the aporia marking the undecidable and unstable relations between authority and subjectivity in urbanism and citizenship reveals the source of interdiction that limit urban citizenship theories from offering legal or ontological models of citizenship distinct from the state. Both urbanization and citizenship are inextricably caught up in problems of political limits generated by claims of security and insecurity.

§2.6: *What Follows*

Because the aporia premises the impossibility for any final solution to problems of sovereignty, urban citizenship, I suggest, should be analyzed not as an alternative

¹⁸⁰ Additionally, I do not intend to claim that isn’t possible to separate city and state into two domains of citizenship, but opening up the fact that the state originated in the city, yet has problematically come to be thought of as superordinate to the city in the processes of urbanization and modernization.

ontology to statist politics, but as an aporetic process underpinned by the twinned transition narratives of citizenship and urbanization. For this reason, analyzing the double process within urban citizenship as an opening, rather than a paralyzing dead-end or closure of political possibility is crucial; for it can “mark not merely the failure of concepts but a new potential to experience and imagine the im-possible.”¹⁸¹ While an analysis of the aporia as the underlying logic in urbanism and citizenship reveals the tendency to resort to ideals of sovereign security, attempts to think about political possibility are not necessarily limited to this common move. In the following chapter, then, I will consider how urbanism and citizenship, combined as “urban citizenship”, can be better read as a series of an aporetic practices that are temporarily co-constituted and expressed as not only challenging political assumptions of order but as a prelude to new political categories and unexpected relations.

¹⁸¹ Anthony Burke, "Aporias of Security," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 27, no. 1 (2002): 5.

Chapter III: Indeterminate Community and Experimental Politics

Urban citizenship, as I examined at the outset of this thesis, is an attempt to re-conceptualize political community outside the domain of the state and in the face of emerging social, economic, and cultural phenomena. However, prevailing conceptions of urban citizenship reveal a deeply contradictory and mutually constitutive historical rendering of the terms “urbanization” and “citizenship”, which express the extant grip that the modern concept of sovereignty has on our political imagination and the extent to which our thinking continues to be bound up in nature/culture binaries. Yet, the purpose of this thesis has not been to show the absolute necessity of the route to sovereign politics prescribed in these accounts. Rather, it has been my aim to show that there has been a problem that these authors have not worked through adequately: the problem of the twin aporias of urbanization and citizenship, which I discussed in the last chapter. The inability of scholars to adopt a non-statist approach to urban citizenship only indicates how difficult the problem is, and that there are no easy solutions. If the spatiotemporal logic of a Schmittian sovereignty and its signaling of a unified state and citizenship is constantly threatened by urbanization, then what could a non-statist urban citizenship that reconfigures rather than reproduces the state look like? How might it sustain itself in the face of urbanization without offering a rationale for political withdrawal? What might happen if urban politics did not try to overcome the aporia of sovereignty, nor succumb to the simplistic dual logics of the modern state, but instead, engaged with the aporias of urbanization and citizenship embedded by the state in new and interesting ways? And what contemporary political practices, if any, come close to exemplifying novel engagements with these questions? These are some of the guiding questions for this

chapter.

My argument in this chapter is that the aporias underlying urban citizenship not only reveal its implication in the statist ontology, but can also help destabilize it in a way that does not directly reproduce it or depoliticize it. First, I will analyze three routes that have the capacity to break with the statist underpinnings produced in accounts of urban citizenship: (i) detaching urban politics from the vocabulary of singularity, following Jean Luc Nancy, for if sovereign politics holds the notion of political community at its center, then the very notion of community, must be reconsidered; (ii) interrupting the dominant spatiotemporal narrative of the state; and (iii) conceiving urban citizenship not as a static concept or a series of ordered practices, but rather as a collective of subversive creative *acts* that occludes flow with the hegemonic spatiotemporal stream. Second, I will examine a case study in which the aporias of the urban and citizenship both limit and shape democratic possibilities in the city. Lastly, I will show how we can expand theories of urban citizenship by theorizing with the aporia, not against it, in order to foreground new questions and challenges for future theoretical work.

§3.1: Negating Singularity: Negative Community and The Question of Subjectivity

Despite its frequent association with state-centrism, “urban citizenship”, at its basis, seeks to convey a notion of community devoid of traditional statist conceptions of belonging. Hence, one interesting way of considering the possibility of urban citizenship outside the state is by asking, as Angharad Closs Stephens does in her work on alternative forms of citizenship: what is the possibility of citizenship *without* the statist criteria of

being members of a political community?¹⁸² Put differently, what becomes of citizenship when the state is no longer the presumed starting point from which politics is defined? What would the concept of the political entail without the search for recognition or inclusion?¹⁸³ If urban citizenship is an attempt to discern an intelligible resonance among disparate political claims in the urban sphere, then, in a crucial sense, it is also to reject the binaries of inside/outside that conflate difference. It therefore embraces the Derridean notion of an “uncommon sociality of the city.” Derrida engages this idea in *Politics of Friendship*, where he refers to the state’s social discordance as the “belonging to” crisis, asking readers to reconsider political community by omitting the utopian vision of a universal notion of belonging which functions as a national narrative of oneness.¹⁸⁴ We can use this notion to shift our focus away from reading urban citizenship as a means for privileging certain groups in attempts to universalize certain rights and difference; we can then move towards a mode of urban community that retains a sense of being through a pluralized account of its political power as derived *through* the city, rather than the state. Yet, what is it about the city that makes this desirable return to the Aristotelian idea that citizenship is fundamentally tied to the city? Are we merely replacing the state with the city; exchanging one master for another? Rethinking political community through the city highlights its unassigned meaning as constantly in-the-making, through our everyday actions, processes and interactions. If one is to rethink what greater democratic politics

¹⁸² Angharad Closs Stephens, "Citizenship without Community, Time, Design and the City 1," *Citizenship Studies* 14.1 (2010): 5.

¹⁸³ Angharad Closs Stephens and Vicki Squire, "Politics Through a Web: Citizenship and Community Unbound," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30.3 (2012): 1, 21.

¹⁸⁴ Étienne Balibar, "Derrida and the “Aporia of the Community,” *Philosophy Today* 53 (2009): 8.

and direct forms of governance mean today, then one should pay close attention to how politics is created through everyday lived experienced in the city.

Theories of urban citizenship, often posed as an attempt to rethink such politics, resist the inside/outside division of the state. As I briefly examined in Chapter 1, they do so especially through an analysis of political claims staked by often depoliticized groups, be it workers, environmentalists, or non-status migrants. Prevailing responses to the statist perspective of citizenship, as I have discussed, confer a distinctly singular language of statist political community in the city that is conflated into dyads of us/them, inside/outside, and nature/culture. Closs Stephens, however, argues for an approach to citizenship that dispenses with such vocabularies. She calls for recasting citizenship from a fixed category to one defined by “acts,” and focuses on “those moments through which identities, allegiances, and association are formed, and what takes place when we encounter, engage with and attach ourselves to others.”¹⁸⁵ This suggestion is useful for rethinking but retaining the presumption that sovereignty as political life is conditioned by the state and its territorially binary framework.¹⁸⁶ The enactment of state sovereignty lasts because we rely on it for many purposes; namely for ensuring a balance of power and safeguarding liberal principles among a system of states.¹⁸⁷ Yet, one interesting way to think about what becomes of urban citizenship when the state is no longer assumed to be the starting point from which politics is defined, is by probing what a notion of the

¹⁸⁵ Angharad Closs Stephens, "Citizenship Without Community, Time, Design and the City 1," *Citizenship Studies* 14.1 (2010): 5.

¹⁸⁶ Jeffery Hou, "Insurgent Public Space: Guerilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities," *Routledge Handbook of Global Citizenship Studies*, eds. Engin Isin and Peter Nyers (Milton Park, New York: Routledge, 2014), 1.

¹⁸⁷ R. B. J. Walker, "Polis, Cosmopolis, Politics," *Alternatives* 28.2 (2003): 278; Warren Magnusson, *Local Self-Government and the Right to the City*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015, 116.

political might entail without the search for recognition and inclusion, with emphasis instead, upon the processes by which subjects are formed.¹⁸⁸ It involves, as Étienne Balibar suggests, following Jean-Luc Nancy's words, the question of: "what *comes to pass* when it comes after the subject?"¹⁸⁹ In other words, what becomes of politics or even life after the metaphysics of sovereignty and the subject are left behind, when they are no longer determinable?

If the inside/outside vocabulary is called into question, then so is the question of subjectivity. While the statist binary framework no longer serves adequately for carving out the location of politics from the complexity of the world, the Kantian subject still remains politicized. This means that the universalization of rights in the city still needs to be negotiated and justice still administered. Urban citizenship does not close the question of subjectivity by dissolving or universalizing it; instead, it opens it up. Rethinking subjectivity through the co-created city means giving voice to those marginalized from the democratic process, questioning an already-decided subjection to "higher" decision-making processes from which we are often excluded—whether these are environmental, immigration, health, or educational concerns. Thinking of community beyond the framework of statist political subjectivity raises an important question of how one is to ascribe meaning to the present when a transcendental *telos* of autonomous "man" no longer proves a valid way of narrating the world in the face of current conditions.¹⁹⁰ As mentioned in chapter 1, approaches to urban citizenship often result in disparate and

¹⁸⁸ Stephens, Angharad Closs, and Vicki Squire, "Politics Through a Web: Citizenship and Community unbound," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30.3 (2012): 1, 21.

¹⁸⁹ Balibar, Étienne, *Citizen Subject: Foundations for Philosophical Anthropology*, trans. Steven Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 26.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

particularistic claims on the part of subjects throughout the city. How then could a “demand for a right of community control and decision-making over the planning and governance of the cities...be realized beyond a system of voting or overcome the hegemony of entrepreneurial or ethnocratic urban regimes?”¹⁹¹ If the statist conception of the subject beckons a “higher” governing body, then applying the notion of citizenship within the urban sphere to work as a political alternate to state sovereignty would have to detach itself from the projection of that transcendental Kantian category.

In counterpoint to the idea that the subject remains politicized even when those who count as political are universalized, Sergei Prozorov claims that not everything is political for the subject. Prozorov, for his part, takes political subjectification to intervene by opposing imposed power structures. However, he contends that the “question of *what* world should be politicized is always a matter of the subject’s own decision that cannot be grounded in ontology.”¹⁹² What this point overlooks, however, is that a decision to step back from the world and make the judgment to *not* intervene is a political one. It is, by its very implication, an expression of the Kantian autonomy in which individuals are independent beings who decide what and what not to project onto the world rather than acknowledging their always-already co-implication in it. Non-engagement, too, has political consequences, not least when deciding what does and does not deserves priority, which in turn, plays a role in the extent to which the status quo is either challenged or maintained.

¹⁹¹ Talja Blokland, et al., "Urban Citizenship and Right to the City: The Fragmentation of Claims," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39.4 (2015): 658.

¹⁹² Sergei Prozorov, *Ontology and World Politics: Void Universalism I* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 108.

Rethinking subjectivity, not as a matter of “becoming” political subjects through the city, but rather, as a different mode through which to re-enunciate our subjectivity to an already constituted urban “we” is the task at hand. For if one is to retain a sense of community, then a notion of “they” is always presupposed, and hence at risk of being positioned antagonistically against the “we.”¹⁹³ Yet, many analyses of urban citizenship, as discussed, have inherited the Kantian notion of the subject as a self-sufficient, autonomous, and sovereign individual. If such analyses are to articulate a non-statist approach, then they must abandon this traditional notion of subjectivity and confront what I call ‘the problem of the indeterminate subject,’ the tenuous subjectification when the authority of statist categories such as inside/outside are thrown into question and political rights claims are examined from an urban perspective. This raises crucial questions; namely: what becomes of the statist subject when a city seeks to govern itself according to universal ideals of inclusion? What, in other words, happens to the “we” that is produced and managed by the state when we look to construct a politics of the urban—does it simply dissolve into a series of unintelligible, fragmented, non-cohesive claims? And if not, what are the new circumstances under which we may we speak of it? According to Nancy, rethinking the “we” of the urban, and within complex processes of urbanization, is possible through a shift in the way we conceive of our subjectivity, from subjects of the state, to subjects from which a community of *happening* continuously emerges, continuously surprises.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (New York: Psychology Press, 2005), 15.

¹⁹⁴ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Richard D. Richardson and Anne O’Byrne (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 156.

Yet, this generates uncertainty over what kind of community that might be, and ultimately an indeterminacy concerning what kind of subjectivity is bound to the “we” of that community.¹⁹⁵ In describing this indeterminacy, I follow Sophie Watson’s mobilization of Deutscher’s notion of “non-indifference to the other,” whereby indeterminacy is described as “the abandonment of references to a transcendent ground of power” which “exposes us to others, and with exposure, democracy is invented”.¹⁹⁶ While this notion of subjectivity may entail the need to become comfortable with being uncomfortable in our undetermined, yet characteristically urban “we-ness,” such acts involve a constant process that does not conform to a specific vision of the state, thus leaving open the possibility of what Levinas describes as a set of “democratic rights [which] can then be understood not simply as a freedom *of* the self but a freedom *from* the self, from its egotism.”¹⁹⁷ In this sense, subjects of urban citizenship should not be regarded as atomistic and relational, but as already co-implicated in the city that exposes their mutual connectedness and responsibility to regard the body of the urban as one’s own.

Being a citizen of an intelligible, yet non-predetermined community thus requires imagining politics not solely in universalized, fragmented and atomistic terms, nor as a singular “inside,” but *both*. Rethinking the relationship between community and subjectivity in the urban context in this way fosters the capacity for unity in what may be

¹⁹⁵ See also: Homi Bhabha, "Freedom's Basis in the Indeterminate," *October* 61 (1992): 46-57.

¹⁹⁶ Sophie Watson, *City publics: The (dis) Enchantments of Urban Encounters* (London: Routledge, 2006), 10.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

expressed as Nancy's co-existential analytic of "being singular plural."¹⁹⁸ As Martin Coward suggests, the rise of urban or "metropolitanized" subjectivities involves truncating the gap that separates the individual from their environment, giving rise to a relational assemblage consisting of "singular subjects comprising hybrid articulations of human and non-human material."¹⁹⁹ The only boundaries between us, for him, consist of materials such as walls, houses, trains, wires, and skyscrapers. Between us, his central argument claims, is "...neither empty space nor simply a human bond," but rather "...a surface of contact, a point of articulation, at which heterogeneous elements are assembled into complex ecologies of subjectivity...the urban fabric."²⁰⁰ To rethink subjectivity from the state to the urban would require, he proposes, a move towards thinking about the relationship between citizens and their communities as "singularities" through "the materialities they incorporate and the others to whom they are exposed."²⁰¹

What this analysis contributes to thinking about urban citizenship is a shift towards imagining a political urban community without reverting to old statist models of citizenship and community.²⁰² This is largely due to the emphasis and elevation of materiality in what is for him our "being singular plural." I agree with his analysis that urban communities may be understood in non-statist terms so as to unlock logics that have been stifled by classical understandings of citizenship. This may be done through

¹⁹⁸ Nancy uses this phrase to consider our "being-in-common" as inseparable from "community". See: Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 2000.

¹⁹⁹ Martin Coward, "Between Us in the City: Materiality, Subjectivity, and Community in the Era of Global Urbanization," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30.3 (2012): 474, 478.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid. 479.

²⁰² Ibid.

the complex assemblages that are interwoven with the materiality of the city.²⁰³ Indeed, this view differs from a typical relational ontology in that it engages with the aporia of community by depicting an imagery of communities as co-implicated rather than making a sovereign decision about that co-implication.

§3.2: Urban Spatiotemporal Narratives

What is often missing from analyses of urban citizenship is a way of thinking beyond entry into the state, which is depicted as the only route to becoming a political actor. When articulations of urban citizenship are made, they tend to be framed within a distinctively statist spatiotemporal narrative. This narrative, as I mentioned in chapter 2, is interwoven with an ontology of becoming modern, urban, and civilized which follows a pre-modern, state of nature from which we ostensibly once existed. If the origins of nature and culture are fictive, then there is a possibility to politically engage with the aporia in order for urban citizenship to interrupt the dominant spatiotemporal narratives of the state. One way of doing this is by rejecting a linear and irrevocable notion of state temporality (past/present; premodern/modern), and spatiality (inside/outside; urban/rural), acknowledging the fuzziness of urban spatiotemporal boundaries. Michael Shapiro's work on time and community relations offers a useful alternative to urban citizenship as "a politics that privileges multiple, disjunctive presences within the space of the state rather than a politics that moves toward the integration of a unitary national culture."²⁰⁴ While writing in a different context, and drawing from Nancy's work in his

²⁰³ Ibid; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi. (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

²⁰⁴ Michael Shapiro, "National Times and Other Times: Re-thinking Citizenship," *Cultural Studies* 14.1 (2000): 82.

focus on writing as a dissident practice, Shapiro's analysis offers a useful, non-definitive basis for thinking about politics in terms of its "temporal junctures" and its non-linearity.²⁰⁵ As Shapiro argues, the "being-in-common of citizenship need not take the form of ending a common discursive ground within which different interests can be communicated".²⁰⁶ As he points out, Nancy similarly suggests that "the sharing of the space of community requires the shattering of the myths of commonality upon which collectives predicate their (imaginary) cohesion."²⁰⁷ Thinking about urban citizenship in terms of non-linear, non-fixed contradictory processes of urbanization, and citizenship as both self-government and government, opens up conditions of possibility for different ways of being and acting politically.

This approach inevitably throws into question the supposed political fixity of citizenship. Shapiro's suggestion that we need to think of the "now" time(s) of the global city proves a useful way of challenging national time with its *telos* of urbanism, modernism, and homeostasis. It moves towards an urban time of continual process and heterostasis. Shapiro argues:

The politics of citizenship within this framework accepts disjointed co-presence, and moves towards a model of community that cannot exist in one coherent temporal trajectory, cannot found a single 'horizon behind us,' and cannot anticipate or accomplish a unified self-presence.²⁰⁸

For Shapiro, citizenship operates not as something "to come" nor as something based on the fabrication of a cohesive, stable history; instead, it exists in the "now." Shapiro's aim is to establish a "poetics of the city," and while constructing an urban politics through the

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 84.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 85.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 96.

arts (e.g. cinema and text), his analysis is highly relevant for generating ways to think about urban politics as processual. Specifically, his analysis proves useful for thinking about moving from a national time towards an urban time that does not reproduce a *telos* of becoming “closer” to our original nature. Nor does his analysis support thinking according to a *telos* of growth and development; but instead, towards an urban politics of disjuncture, overlapping histories, process, and uncertainty

Another different, though relevant, account of alternative citizenship narratives, supports this claim. While Homi K. Bhabha’s analysis focuses on “writing the nation,” applying this framework to what I would call ‘writing the *urban*’ may prove useful to rethinking an urban citizenship that engages with the aporetic logics of the state politically. Here, Bhabha’s notion of *post-colonial time* is particularly useful. This notion of time “questions the teleological traditions of past and present, and the polarized historic *sensibility* of the archaic and the modern.”²⁰⁹ Similarly, the urban, with its conflicting claims—immigration, anti-capitalism, ecological, labour, immigration, ontological—challenges the political sign of the state which assigns the category of “the people” as a singularity. In this sense, thinking about the urban through these claims raises questions about community *without* the temporal movement towards transcendence.²¹⁰ As Bhabha writes, “social causality cannot be adequately understood as a deterministic or overdetermined effect of a ‘statist’ centre.”²¹¹

§3.3: Heterostasis and Urban Experimentation

²⁰⁹ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 304.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 217.

²¹¹ Ibid.

What, then, might urban citizenship as a form of public action and democratic participation look like outside the state? This question, which I discussed in detail in Chapter 1, is posited by numerous theories of urban citizenship. I want to suggest a different way of thinking that does not conform, whether intentionally or not, to the binary thinking of inside/outside. As such, conceiving politics in the urban rather than through the state by means of an engagement with the aporias of urbanization and citizenship is needed: a thinking of the urban as constantly being written intervenes with the supposed fixity of state space and sheds light on the ways that governmental power subverts collective social action in the city from democratic ends. Urban citizenship must be conceived as an alternative practice of citizenship. It might be better thought in terms of a fragmented urban community of co-constituted subjects aided by an external material environment with no clear boundaries. Moreover, it is constructed by a series of counter-narratives to the national space-time of the state. As Magnusson suggests, “if one follows the logic of local self-government to its conclusions, one begins to see that a different idea of the political is implicit in that logic.”²¹² This, he suggests, challenges the idea that politics comes from the state because politics also manifests out of everyday power relations: “politics is everywhere, in the family, on the streets, in the class-room, in the office, in the concert hall, wherever one might look.” This is due to the fact that power relations exist everywhere, thus “to be subject to power is to be subject to politics.”²¹³

²¹² Warren Magnusson, "Are Municipalities Creatures of the Provinces?" *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'Études Canadiennes* 39, no. 2 (2006): 16; Rancière is also particularly powerful on this point. See: Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, ed. and trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2004): 47.

²¹³ Ibid, 17. See also Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (USA: Random House, Inc, 1978), 93.

Indeed, to politicize is to question the power being exercised.²¹⁴

Yet, to think of urban citizenship as a matter of politics arising out of the everyday life in the streets is not to do away with the state. It is important to recognize our implication in the wider processes of the places in which we live—whether these involve thinking at the level of the neighborhood, the city, the state, or the globe.²¹⁵ One example includes a focus on cities as part and parcel of spontaneous and temporary sustainability movements, such as garden cities or processes of urban water management, which do not rely on a particular vision.²¹⁶ Approaching politics from the city is similar to what Edward Soja calls using a regional lens, which is “less concerned with binaries and disciplinary constraints and... more open to timely adaptation to meet new demands and challenges.”²¹⁷ In this sense, it promotes a synthesis of urban and global imaginaries while acknowledging the persisting role of the nation-state.²¹⁸ Paying attention to our co-implication in the aporetic processes of the city not only highlights new ways of thinking about the ways and places political processes take place; it also incites creative ways of thinking about the co-governing of those processes.

§3.4: Insurgent Urban Citizenship

How might we then destabilize the dominant statist ontology through aporetic practices of urban citizenship that seek to reconcile opposing narratives of change and stasis? Thinking through this, I now turn my analysis to one way of rethinking citizenship

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 19.

²¹⁶ Federico Caprotti and Robert Cowley, "Interrogating Urban Experiments," *Urban Geography* (2016): 1.

²¹⁷ Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, 189.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

in the face of pressing issues of urbanization: James Holston's notion of *insurgent citizenship*. This concept does not necessarily seek to overturn "state citizenship", but rather, problematizes it by expanding its meaning to include the different ways we might think about co-producing, co-operating, and re-configuring citizenship without falling into the common trap of invoking statist ontologies of authority and subjectivity. For Holston, insurgence

describes a process that is an acting counter, a counterpolitics, that destabilizes the present and renders it fragile, defamiliarizing the coherence with which it usually presents itself. Insurgence is not a top-down composition of an already scripted future. It bubbles up from the past in places where present circumstances seem propitious for an irruption. In this view, the present is like a bog: leaky, full of holes, gaps, contradictions, and misunderstandings.²¹⁹

As this quote suggests, the process of insurgence throws into question prevailing norms by rendering them porous, incomplete, and messy. Following this line of thought, urban citizenship may be thought similarly as polymorphous and unbounded to authorizations of what side of the "line" it ought to occur on. As discussed in chapter 1, advancing claims of particular groups under the guise of universal rights invokes sovereign politics by posing demands that require sovereign solutions. This common move alerts us to the need to conceive a right to the city as exceeding such containments, as part of a wider multitude of ongoing practices and processes in a variety of neighborhood contexts, which are not necessarily bound to urban settings. Yet, to avoid presenting itself as an "outside" movement, which risks depoliticization by the state as mere noise, it must counter-balance prevailing state narratives. It need not strictly oppose or overcome them, but rather, engage with the state by means of ongoing practices taking place through the

²¹⁹ James Holston, *Insurgent citizenship: Disjunctions of democracy and modernity in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 34.

urban. The political question that this raises is: how can such a form of citizenship help illuminate which practices secure more and better rights in challenging circumstances, and which of these are challenged by forces of neoliberal governance and urbanization?

§3.5: Insurgent Urban Citizenship at Berlin's Tempelhof

I now wish to turn to a specific case study of engagement with the aporetic intersections of the urban and citizenship, one that highlights possible sources of the transient emergence of urban democracy. I would like to examine the political contestations surrounding Berlin's conversion of the *Flughafen Tempelhof*. While I am critical of using specific case studies to further demonstrate theoretical points, since they run risk of overlooking a series of important empirical and theoretical factors, I still wish to highlight how practices of insurgent urban citizenship and innovative participatory processes have been used to negotiate, subvert, and even succumb to the statist and market-driven imperatives of urbanization. I refer to this specific case because it illustrates some of the ways in which competing narratives of what it means to "become political" contradict, undermine, but ultimately reinforce each other in ways that can be useful for future theories of urban citizenship. Specifically, this case helps illustrate one of my central points in Chapter 2: that the aporetic relationship between urbanization and citizenship is ultimately irresolvable through urban citizenship as an alternative ontology to state sovereignty. A brief analysis of the struggles and successes of Tempelhof concludes by raising points of both caution and hope for future attempts to navigate through the impasse of political authority and subjectivity in urban citizenship politics.

Walking onto Berlin's Tempelhof field for the first time is a striking experience: one enters the vast, open space of an inner-city airfield where the sky stretches above the

planes, resembling a green Sahara amidst the urban maze of Berlin. At the same time, it appears as just an ordinary field, one not excessively maintained and captures the scene of everyday Berliners and international visitors enjoying the city's cherished park culture. The 386-hectare area is located between the Tempelhof, Neukolln, and Kreuzberg districts. Currently, the field houses Germany's largest refugee camp. It also carries a complex and oppressive history. It functioned as a concentration camp from 1939 to 1944, and it was the first central airport to which the USA and Great Britain supplied food and other resources during West Berlin's Cold War resistance, when the rest of the city's land routes were blocked by the Soviet Union.²²⁰ After some private deliberations in 2008, the State, having claimed ownership of the park, along with city policymakers, the state of Brandenburg, and the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development, jointly decided to shut down the airport in order to re-direct air traffic. They temporarily re-opened the field as a public-space.²²¹ However, questions as to who would be reclaiming the space, and how its boundaries and form would be shaped proliferated and have been contested to this day.²²²

Tempelhof is an interesting case because, while looks like an ordinary field, it is a site fraught with contestations over identity, subjectivity, authority, and community. From an ecological standpoint, the municipal government of Berlin has acknowledged that "nature conservation" and "the improvement of green spaces" are imperatives for

²²⁰ Jeffrey Hou, *Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities*, Milton Park; New York: Routledge (2010), 54.

²²¹ Jorn Welsch, "Urban Climatic Map Studies," in *The Urban Climatic Map: A Methodology for Sustainable Urban Planning*, eds. Edward Ng and Chao Ren (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2015): 176.

²²² Ibid.

sustainable urban development and local democracy.²²³ In this context, the open, green space of Tempelhof Field exemplifies the city's larger environmental vision pushed forward through three policy projects: *The Urban Development Plan Climate, Berlin's Biodiversity Strategy, and the Urban Landscape Strategy*, which was particularly instrumental in the process of the debate.²²⁴ Yet, this move towards a more sustainable, green future became problematized by a logic of urbanization which sought to fix the space in order to develop it into commercial and non-commercial housing, regular housing, and a science-park, as part of the *Berlin Senate Department's* plans.²²⁵ In May 2014, however, these municipal plans were overthrown with a public referendum.

In response to the Senate's publicized plans to develop the field, informal participatory initiatives were collectively formed. The largest was the community-based initiative, 100 % ThF, which demanded an "inclusive and transparent participation process involving citizens, interest groups, and associations in developing the concept of a protected landscape area."²²⁶ The grounds on which it based its demands for public use included: the fact that the airfield was a historical site of National crime; a recreational space used for a number of activities including cycling, running, picnicking, land-sailing and kite-flying; an eco-habitat for a range of species including birds, butterflies, trees and flowers; and that its significance had demonstrated its full embrace by city inhabitants,

²²³ Holle Thierfelder and Nadja Kabisch, "Viewpoint Berlin: Strategic Urban Development in Berlin – Challenges for Future Urban Green Space Development," *Environmental Science & Policy*, 62 (2016): 121.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Karin Bradley and Johan Hedrén, *Green Utopianism: Perspectives, Politics and Micro-Practices 2* (New York: Routledge 2014): 137.

with thousands frequenting the space daily.²²⁷ Additionally, urban citizens informally organized a workshop called *Das Grosse Ganze* (The Whole Picture), which fostered “open dialogues” and a negotiation of themes that were to define the issues, breaking them down to “gentrification/social exclusion”, “climate and species protection,” “the planning process,” and “network building and finances.”²²⁸ This was in response to the city’s urbanization, which posed as a threatening force against the natural habitat and inclusive democratic accountability. *Contra* these local proposals, the Senate expressed concerns that preserving the green space would push low-income housing residents to the city’s periphery.²²⁹ Nevertheless, citizens formed new initiatives where they could negotiate with urban planners and neighbors, and spaces collective deliberation and decision making processes as collective local (and non-locals) were engaged in order to generate their own meanings and pluralize the future projections of their city.

The plans occurred at the intersections of formal and informal planning, between collective and ‘expert’ plans, “planning discourse” and “grassroots mobilization”, from which they took shape through what were called “deliberative forums.”²³⁰ Organizations such as *id22*, a multidisciplinary NGO that conceived Berlin as an urban lab, and *eXperiment city*, among many others, worked collectively to foster a process-oriented

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Hanna Hilbrandt, "Insurgent Participation: Consensus and Contestation in Planning the Redevelopment of Berlin-Tempelhof Airport," *Urban Geography* 38.4 (2017), 537-556.

²³⁰ Ákos Moravánszky, Christian Schmid, and Lukasz Stanek, eds. *Urban Revolution Now: Henri Lefebvre in Social Research and Architecture*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., (2014), 290; Hanna Hilbrandt, "Insurgent Participation: Consensus and Contestation in Planning the Redevelopment of Berlin-Tempelhof Airport." *Urban Geography*, 38 no. 4, (2017), 547.

approach to planning the use of the space.²³¹ Ideas were gathered through creative international competitions among architects, artists, urban developers, and other actors.²³² Here, urban citizens emphasized the contestation of spatial practices that highlight Tempelhof's role in the everyday lives of people.²³³ These self-organized forums have been referred to as forms of "insurgent participation" insofar as they "provided an opportunity to voice controversial ideas and network with other attendees, they allowed citizens to reframe planning questions, and they provided a possibility to envision development alternatives" beyond the scope of the Senate.²³⁴ Rather than leaving it to 'backdoor' agreements, citizens used the forums to educate themselves on the specificities of the political process and foster a more intelligible public counter-discourse.²³⁵ In this process, a diverse range of experimental citizens' initiatives sprang up and not only catered towards left-wing activist groups like 100% ThF, but also towards conservative groups such as ProTempelhof in favor of development for commercial business.²³⁶ The field's first guerilla gardening initiative, *Allmende Kontor* (loosely meaning "office for community spaces"; '*Allmendede*' referring to a call to "reclaim the commons") provided a space for insurgent citizenship to confer its own politics in the Tempelhof negotiations.²³⁷ The free-membership based project formed in April 2011 with the first seed sowing, eventually growing to approximately 900 members

²³¹ Jeffrey Hou, ed. *Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities*, (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2010), 68.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid, 547, 549.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Stephanie Wunder, "Learning for Sustainable Agriculture: Urban Gardening in Berlin," *Ecologic, Berlin* (2013), 8, 10.

in 2013.²³⁸ To be sure, the real dangers of autonomous urban communities that attempt to form separate from the state are well recognized here, I am merely highlighting that collective, yet dispersed efforts to decenter the hegemonic aspirations of the state led to variegated projects which deliberated with each other in interesting ways that, in a somewhat democratic fashion, influenced the direction of the Senate's plans.

I do not intend to portray the conflict as a struggle between grassroots community members and state organizations. That would downplay the multiple subjectivities at stake in the issue, and obfuscate a series of other actors involved who complicated the dynamics of the struggle; namely economic actors from various global circuits, refugees, the unemployed, non-citizens, and ethnic minorities, many of whom would later go on to establish relationships through the co-production of food and labour while actively engaged in intergenerational relation formations.²³⁹ Core organizers of the initiative (13 members, 9 of them founders) are still currently active in the exchanges among administrations, policy-makers, and NGOs.²⁴⁰ In this context, questions about what the best and most natural form of local self-government were dispersed, and all ran up against the Senate but were also bound by it.

The source of this binding can be located in the discursive practices of governmentality and individual sovereignty. A closer examination reveals that despite successes with the initiatives and referendum, the regulative ideal of sovereignty is still very much present. The formation of 'informal' community projects advocating the

²³⁸ Ibid, 9.

²³⁹ Ibid, 5.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 11.

preservation of space at Tempelhof, for example, express an entanglement of semi-regulated community activism with polyvalent theatricalities of the state.²⁴¹ Nezar AlSayyad and Ananya Roy describe urban informality as “an organizing logic, a system of norms that governs the process of urbanization itself.”²⁴² Citywide regulations such as “the Federal Building Code, the local building regulations and general park regulations limited the extent to which citizens could use the land.”²⁴³ Moreover, spatial regulations including “fencing restricted access and security patrols rendered the Tempelhofer Freiheit a highly controlled environment, making it an idealized urban space where all activities inside were under close scrutiny.”²⁴⁴

Even voting for a referendum meant supporting an existing law, which as Hilbrandt points out, is “hardly an act of insurgency.”²⁴⁵ These outcomes express a regulated exercise of individual liberal sovereignty. As Haid, citing Eric Swyngedouw, states,

The city administration reveals its Janus face, by simultaneously acting as an enabler and a restrictor of exactly what it has enabled. The state can never fully withdraw from newly developed governance models that include participation and the assignment of responsibility to civil society since it is precisely the state that needs to respond to assigned public responsibilities (Swyngedouw, 2006).²⁴⁶

²⁴¹ Christian Haid, "The Janus face of urban governance: State, informality and ambiguity in Berlin," *Current Sociology* 65, no. 2 (2017): 290.

²⁴² Ananya Roy, "Urban Informality: Toward an Epistemology of Planning," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 71.2 (2005): 148. See also: Ananya Roy, and Nezar AlSayyad, *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia* (Oxford: Lexington Books), 2004.

²⁴³ Christian Haid, "The Janus Face of Urban Governance: State, Informality and Ambiguity in Berlin." *Current Sociology* (2016): 239.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Hanna Hilbrandt, "Insurgent Participation: Consensus and Contestation in Planning the Redevelopment of Berlin-Tempelhof Airport," *Urban Geography* 38, no. 4, 2017; 2016; pp. 550.

²⁴⁶ Haid, "The Janus Face of Urban Governance: State, Informality and Ambiguity in Berlin," 239.

The Janus faced character of state sovereignty is, as I discussed in chapter 2, a historical effect arising from the problem of the constitution of an inside/outside. The necessity for sovereign security reveals its authority despite local community interventions in state practices. This was further illustrated in the regulation of community initiatives, such as the garden, when the Senate had signed a contractual agreement with two state owned companies, GrunBerlin GmbH and Tempelhof Projekt GmbH. The former was designated as responsible for park management while the latter was responsible for project-design, construction marking, and sales.²⁴⁷ These two companies facilitated the informal participation process through online dialogues, citizen polls, and open presentations and discussions.²⁴⁸ The endorsement of the two companies, while presented as supporting the citizen's insurgent garden initiative, was in actuality, an attempt to reconcile "top-down planning and bottom-up use."²⁴⁹ In one interview, garden pioneers and pro-Tempelhof political activists felt that the garden initiative was "allowed" because it was thought to forestall community members from adopting more "silly" schemes.²⁵⁰ Practices of urban citizenship influenced governmental mandates, yet they were also bound by them. Experimental grassroots movements were influential in the shaping of the Tempelhof space only insofar as it was permitted and mediated by a certain degree of policing as part of the Senate's distant form of governing. Such practices form part of a wider strategy of liberal governance, including self-governance, which, as Magnusson suggests, reflects the "ambiguous ideal of local self-government. On the one hand, it is a

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 546.

²⁴⁸ Ibid; Karin Bradley and Johan Hedrén, *Green Utopianism: Perspectives, Politics and Micro-Practices*, 2 (New York: Routledge, 2014), 138.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 138.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

strategy for freeing populations from distant and unaccountable governors. On the other hand, it is also a strategy that those same governors employ to get people to govern themselves in the way that their governors want.”²⁵¹

Despite these limitations, there are ways of thinking beyond the seemingly debilitating governmentality of the state and urbanization. Through an insurgent nexus of speech and vision, different spacetimes and ways of thinking about human relationships with nature (not as something to be mastered through commercial development) can be collectively experienced without being de-politicized. The insurgent practices of urban citizenship at Tempelhof did not promulgate solely as a series of resistance movements but designated their own spheres of engagement. This was done through self-assembled deliberative forums, guerilla gardening, open-dialogues, and a negotiation of themes that fostered the capacity to envision development alternatives outside those of the Senate. In doing so, political spaces were carved out, yet with no clear boundaries as to who would be included or excluded from the process; non-citizens, refugees, the elderly, and children were all welcome to participate in collaborations such as deliberative forums and garden initiatives. The field, while seemingly just a field, was transmuted into a politicized space with multiple perspectives of freedom and control, a mesh of citizens and governing officials. By opposing developers through a range of debates and a referendum, Tempelhof is now legally preserved and used as a public space for fostering a wide range of community involvement. I am not suggesting that they are entirely cut off from distant neoliberal market and regulating programs, nor do they reliably assist the

²⁵¹ Warren Magnusson, "Urbanism, Cities and Local Self- Government," *Canadian Public Administration*, 48.1 (2005): 118.

marginalized. The fact that it shaped the outcomes in a considerably different way than the prevailing meanings of the urban is a feat in itself. This is part of what makes the site interesting analytically. It exists within a multiplicity of narratives about authority and subjectivity, not always pertaining to “local” issues. Locating authority ranged from urban planners, business developers, the senate, and subjectivities ranging from those demanding a right to democracy, to urban space for refugees, non-status and status migrants, to a right to the city, to environmental preservation, to housing opportunities, etc., with no membership cost or criteria.

§3.6: Aporetic Practices

At the onset of this thesis, a central question I asked was: what would citizenship look like without proceeding through the state to constitute it? As I mentioned in chapter 2, if politics originated in the city, then it is the city where our identities and communities manifest. If local citizens want to create their own initiatives and create a democratic politics in the city, in hopes for greater urban democracy, it must be recognized that the very notion of citizenship, though intrinsic to the city, is fundamentally predicated on a modernizing logic of spatiotemporal fixity. Posing this against processes of urbanization, which require such fixity in order to carve out their paths, is to beckon a regulative ideal of what is best and natural for society—something which is fundamentally incalculable, yet typically necessary. The case of Tempelhof is useful to show how neglected aspects of neoliberal urbanization operate, yet it is also useful for its capacity to demonstrate how thinking through and within these limits might bring us to other openings for non-state centric politics.

The method of approaching urban citizenship as an aporetic political practice that

opens up the question of citizenship without availing itself to statist ontologies that rely on spatiotemporal narratives of inside/outside and singular conceptions of “we” that entail a presupposed route of our future direction. The undecidability of authority as an effect of this aporetic logic can be used productively to beset statist agendas of neoliberal urbanization. The initiatives at Tempelhof, for example, functioned as an alternative sphere of spatiotemporal narratives where citizens could imagine different ways of using the space which diverged from those which seemed necessary, yet without any permanent collective vision in mind. In this way, the plan for designating the space for private, commercial use was contravened by a series of proposals formed through collective discussion and debate for alternative uses. At the same time, it is interesting that even in such spaces, subjects tend to reiterate capitalist and statist modes of organization and power, either by depending on them for bureaucratic procedures, such as the referendum to take place, and securitizing the park. Unlike the account of urban citizenship I outlined in chapter 1, political participation in this case was not framed entirely as something to be found in the urban as a separate domain of the state. The practices of insurgent urban citizenship demonstrated in the Tempelhof concerned making sense of the contradictory political phenomena already there, of reconciling the sovereignty of urban citizens with that of the state without being told where and when political authority and subjectivity must occur. This is what is at stake in imposed orders of inside/outside, here/there, and us/them binaries which an aporetic analysis of the urban citizenship in Berlin interrupts and complicates by revealing a range of inside/outside ontologies within the state.

I do not intend for my reading and case example of urban politics to exhibit a heroic alternative to the annexation of the political by the modern state. That would be far

too easy, let alone a misleading way to fall into the seduction of the aporia of sovereignty that entices us to order the complexity of the world into attractive dualisms. On this point, one might argue that insurgencies of urban citizenship are only called into being through a counter-politics. This is what Erik Swyngedouw, following Rancière, emphasizes with regards to the capitulation of local community protests to existing state practices and police orders, which are not only, as he suggests, paradoxically questioned by the practices of the order, but also reduced to mere noise, radical anarchy, and relegated to some place ‘outside’ the “consensual” post-democratic arrangement.²⁵² Reaffirmed are state practices of conflating radical urban politics to contestations between inside/outside, formal/informal, and private/public whereby they fall risk to reinstitution. Attempts to politicize Tempelhof as an environmental issue, for example, by protesting through guerilla gardening would be decried here as merely “tickling” the current order, conceived as nothing more than, what Žižek, as Swyngedouw states, describes as “an unending process which can destabilize, displace, and so on, the power structure, without ever being able to undermine it effectively.”²⁵³

Theories of urban citizenship must be attentive to the ways in which their political actions are implicit in the ontology of sovereignty that they seek to subvert. This becomes ever more apparent when we begin to see how deeply embedded our political vocabularies are within a sovereign politics of authority. As Magnusson, following Foucault put it, “our constant resort to a king-like conception of the self is a sign that the *political* ontology of sovereignty is prior to and constitutive of our understanding of individual and social difference. If we do not put those understandings to the test by

²⁵² Erik Swyngedouw, "The Antinomies of the Postpolitical City: In Search of a Democratic Politics of Environmental Production," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33, no. 3 (2009): 615.

²⁵³ Ibid.

questioning their ontological foundations, we repeat the logic of kingship or sovereignty in a particularly unhelpful way.”²⁵⁴ We can extend this line of thought to the context of Tempelhof. Indeed, while the politics of citizens and the way neoliberal urban governance unfolds will always differ from place to place, it is at the unexpected sites of encounters that citizens can mobilize in response to a government with a priori rules and regulations, and learn to negotiate within the pluralized spaces created. However, crucially, the question of urban citizenship is fraught with contestations over what “nature” and the ideal political community ought to be, and this will always express the character of sovereign politics. Solutions, of course, will differ from place to place, and it is only by thinking *within* the aporia that a more promising starting point is possible for thinking about what types of engagements between which actors are necessary at particular times.

So, how does this line of thinking assist people who are currently being kicked out of their houses in the face of massive rent increases, without falling into the same trap if they are really interested in ‘changing’ the system? There may be a number of possible approaches, but it is beyond the limits of my paper to discuss the specific details of other situations and what they might require. My position is that people need to think differently about how politics works—beyond grassroots activists waving signs against policy-makers (although this is still a starting point). Deliberate processes, informal processes, on the ground initiatives—all of our actions and inactions are political. The issue is a question of the governing of those relations, whereby any authority put in place of another is rendered temporary, fickle, and fundamentally unstable.

²⁵⁴ Warren Magnusson, "Hyperspace: A Political Ontology of the Global City," In *Governing Modern Societies*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press (2016): 83.

§3.7: Chapter Conclusion

The phenomena of urban citizenship is a useful starting point from which to analyze and ease our tenuous grasp of the categories we use to construct the modern political imaginary of the world/ourselves are engendered through the very conditions within which we can critique it. However, I am not claiming that this is the best, nor the only way. Exploring the potential for greater democratic politics in the city from an aporetic perspective in other contexts remains yet to be explored, and is beyond scope of this thesis. This chapter does not, therefore, end with a solution to the problems and paradoxes of conceiving urban citizenship; that would defeat my purposes. Rather, my argument is that the starting point from which to critically render a genuinely alternative politics that avoids simply redeeming existing social structures is recognizing the aporia constituting all relations which govern and are governed. At stake here is not only better democratic politics in the city, but the capacity to elude a territorial statist world view that prevents us from better seeing things as they are in all their complexity. I recognize that this may not satisfy those seeking a ‘way out’ of the democratic deficit in which we seem to find ourselves in. What is needed is greater attention to the unexpected sites of contradiction and the aporetic nature of politics. As Massey put it: “it is in the terms of engagement among these intersecting trajectories that lie the politics, the productivity, the questions, the expectations, the potential for surprise.”²⁵⁵ Indeed, it is at the points of contradiction and insurgent demands of something different, not necessarily posed as a distinctly counter-state, where we might find new political possibilities. This task,

²⁵⁵ Doreen Massey, "Some Times of Space," ed. Susan May, *Olafur eliasson: The Weather Project*(2003): 107-118.

however, remains provisional and yet to be further explored in different contexts.

One can either conclude that the aporia of urban citizenship is either debilitating or liberating. That I do not conclude with either claim may be seen as one major limitation to this thesis. On the one hand, some might find it easy to accept that the state endures, insofar as new forms of social solidarity that are called forth engage with its rationalities which permeate much of what is said to constitute political life today. Such rationalities include, for instance, practices of individual sovereignty through self-determination. Articulating politics in this way runs the risk of demarcating new and old forms of subjectivity. In this, I agree with Walker who states that,

Those who oppose a sovereign politics with claims to ethics; or oppose sovereign politics as the formation of a specifically modern culture with a claim to a politics that might be imagined in any other cultural terms; or oppose an understanding of politics as defined in relation to the sovereign state and states system rather than in relation to (specifically capital forms of) economic value. Each marks sites of enormous potential creativity. Yet, each also offers a seductive shortcut back in to the *aporias* of state/system sovereignty as well as promises of long and difficult struggles to reimagine our political imagination.²⁵⁶

The dangers of the substitution of neoliberal statist ontology for another ontology, only to return to where we started, almost seem inevitable. This is part of the difficulty of intervening in the linear trajectory of a regulative ambition of modern political life: “liberties are traded for securities and sovereignties are enabled in the multiple practices of governmentalities of everyday life.”²⁵⁷ Because my argument leads to a recognition of aporia, this means accepting limitations and working within them. As such, people might not be satisfied with this answer. In working out their own articulations of urban

²⁵⁶ Walker, *Out of Line: Essays on the Politics of Boundaries and the Limits of Modern Politics*, 251.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 258.

citizenship, Bauböck, Lippert, and Lefebvre insist on privileging their own subjectivities. However, the logic of sovereignty is multiplied and expressed from their perspective. Readings from only one side will obsufcate another world of politics, or as Walker states, “everyone will dutifully read every contradiction of modern political life from one side or the other.”²⁵⁸

On the other hand, it is only through engaging with aporia that we can begin moving theoretical and practical work on urban citizenship towards more creative directions for thinking within limits, and mutating those limits, through our political actions (and inactions) in the city, on the street, at home. Working from within aporia means coming to terms with the absence of solutions. Therefore, expanding policy practices, planning and local government structures in new and creative ways is needed; however, this will require thinking in terms of temporary, context based settings; settings in which, as Brown suggests, “order, rights and elections would be the background rather than token of democracy.”²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Walker, *Out of Line: Essays on the Politics of Boundaries and the Limits of Modern Politics*, 251.

²⁵⁹ Brown, *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*, 59.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to identify the twin aporetic logics of urbanism and citizenship that are contained within the phenomenon of urban citizenship. In doing so, I have sought to problematize the dominant spatiotemporal ontology and its relationship with the forms of authority and subjectivity that it produces. To this end, I argued that in attempts to escape state sovereignty by theorizing the possibility of citizenship in the domain of the city, theories of urban citizenship continuously reproduce categories of exclusivity which are symptomatic of state sovereignty. Specifically, I highlighted the ways in which prevailing responses to the nation-statist concept of citizenship envision a distinctly singular language of statist political community in the city that reiterates binaries (us/them, inside/outside, self/nation) all of which are redolent of sovereign politics.

In chapter 2, I examined the move through which this aporia becomes expressed as a spatiotemporal trope, the irreconcilable divide between nature and culture produced by state sovereignty. By tracing the origins of citizenship through the city we are presented with a politics that is insubordinate to the state, insofar as humans as political animals in the Aristotelian sense differentiate the just from the unjust in their everyday lives. The divide between natural, animal life from civilized, political life as a prerequisite for becoming urban rests on an endless process of urbanization—from nature to city, from city to world, and beyond, the unfolding of a *telos* towards modernity. The concept of ‘urban citizenship’ fantasizes the synthesis of the nature/culture split outside the domain of the state; however, both concepts in fact depend on sovereign security to maintain themselves. The effects of aporia invert the relational dynamic between the

urban and the citizen, reversing the *telos* of the double transition narratives of the urban and of citizenship: from the ideal of modernity, back to the ideological travesty of a more ‘natural’ and ‘universal’ fabricated urban origin. However, the ultimate ‘ground’ of the urban is fundamentally premised on an unknowable claim to a fixed conception of nature, a conception of nature that is supposedly knowable and calculable. Hence, the need for sovereign authority to secure and define what politics is and where it occurs is unstable and impossible. It is because there is a double aporia underlying urbanism and citizenship that formulations to the problems of citizenship and urbanization cannot be solved with any exactitude. The importance of tracing the logic of the aporia that produces the undecidability of the relations between authority and subjectivity in the urban and of citizenship only reveals the difficulty that an urban citizenship has in escaping state sovereignty.

In Chapter 3, I considered how urban citizenship can reconfigure, rather than reproduce the statist ontology of authority. Following Nancy, I proposed a rethinking of the vocabulary of singularity in the construction of political community. By foregoing a conflation of the complexity of political actors into simplistic dualisms of inside/outside, we can begin rethinking the spatiotemporality of politics in Rancierian terms, as not always occurring in the places and times it is supposed to. In this way, we can begin conceiving politics as processual, discursive and insurgent acts rather than as something static and fixed. An aporetic reading of the contestations of space at Tempelhof provides clues towards different ways of the thinking and acting politically without relying on a priori definitions of who is authorized to act politically and when. Struggles against urbanization of Tempelhof created new political spaces for differing images of

subjectivities. These spaces served as the temporary terrain from which the dominant ontology of the political was negotiated. However, such clues fall risk of concealing more statist structures than they appear to overcome in their insurgent initiatives. The aim of this chapter was to show that while accounts of urban citizenship reproduce the need for sovereign security, this is not the only route: how authority and rights over space are negotiated in economic and political decisions is something that needs to emanate consensually in the city, and it will always differ from place to place and context to context.

The purpose of this study was to identify the effects of the aporia of sovereignty on approaches to urban citizenship in order to gain a better understanding of the causes of the reproduction of exclusionary practices. Consequently, I suggest that theories of urban citizenship must consider ways in which citizenship can be exercised in the city without claiming a right through the state and replicating divides between inside and outside. Interpreting the process-oriented involvement at Tempelhof through the lens of Holston's insurgent citizenship illustrates a need for collective urban action, yet what sort of urban subjectivity, non-predetermined, yet grounded in solidarity will replace the current one remains to be seen, and will differ place to place. By analyzing the mobilization of urban politics through it, we can observe that formations of concrete common political initiatives have the potential to express a plurality of speech from a wide-range of contexts, though that is not to say it will always help the oppressed. Nor is this potential fostered by directly opposing and subverting the state. It is the case that sometimes the only way out is *in*. By thinking with and through aporia, we can begin to discern our own limits, for the very ideas of individual sovereignty and democracy signify aspirations that

emerged in the context of the nature/culture divide originating in the city, an intrinsic feature of state sovereignty as it is currently thought. This thesis might be considered as a starting point to constructing an aporetic ontology, through which we can begin to appreciate the emancipatory potential of this approach for rethinking the conditions of possibility for conceiving democratic politics beyond the state. The question of how we can think through, and consequently move through and beyond, sovereignty is what remains to be further explored, both as present and future happenings.

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