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Jelena Vasiljević,

Antropologija građanstva [Anthropology of Citizenship], Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, Mediterran Publishing: Novi Sad, 2016; 210 pp.: ISBN 9788663910348, \$39.85

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Keywords

Anthropology, citizenship, minority rights, multiculturalism

Jelena Vasiljević, the author of *Anthropology of Citizenship*, is a Senior Research Associate at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade. Her main areas of expertise include citizenship transformations in post-Yugoslav societies, memory politics, culture and rights, active citizenship, and social movements. *Anthropology of Citizenship* is written in Serbian and structured into five main titles and 12 chapters (subtitles). The main titles are the following: (1) Citizenship as an (Anthropological) Research Problem; (2) Citizenship in History and Theory: Frameworks for Understanding and Issuing Citizenship and Human Rights; (3) Argument of Culture in Debates on Citizenship and Civil Rights; (4) Citizenship and Policy of Nationality in the New History of Serbian and Post-Yugoslavian Societies; and (5) Conclusion, followed by critical examinations that clearly show author opinion and her anthropological standpoints.

General appraisal on Vasiljevic's book is that she boldly addresses one of the most challenging problems of the post-Yugoslav states – issues of citizenship, the regulation of minority rights, and the role of culture in the whole process of social transformation of society. For example, Considering the political situation in her native country Serbia, she pointed on cultural trauma that affected ordinary citizens in 90ties. Having in mind the civil wars that followed the processes of Yugoslavia dissolution, Vasiljevic stresses the anthropological approach as a more comprehensive that sociological, in addressing issues of minority rights, recognition of minority cultures and citizenship.

At the beginning, Vasiljevic raises the question of what citizenship exactly is. Hence, she tries to answer the question why it is important to research right now in the Balkan

context. After first attempt to clarify the ambiguity of the translations and receptions of the English term *citizenship* into Serbian, she identifies the homonyms and alternatives to this term with similar ones such as *state*, *nationality*, and *civil rights*. This opens a wide discussion about heteroglossia of semantical and lexical meaning of the term *citizenship* in Serbian, but also in a similar regional language such as Macedonian, Croatian, Bosnian Slovenian, and Bulgarian. This introductory part of the book ends with consideration of the relationship between anthropology and citizenship and emphasizes that this relation is multidimensional, moreover, as such makes the definition of culture more fluid. Culture today faces many challenges that require a reassessment of its content and this is especially intensified by the processes of migration, interculturalism, amalgamation, and political assimilation. What can be noticed as a critique on this introductory chapter of the book is that it lacks a prehistory of theoretical debates that raised the issue of citizenship to the level of one of the most important topics in contemporary social theory. In that regard, Vasiljevic's more attention had to be paid on the positions of the Communitarians and Liberals – debate that in the 1980s hinted at an interest in the issue of minority rights, cultural affiliation, and citizenship.

Furthermore, Vasiljevic explores the historical antecedents of the modern concept of citizenship and, for this purpose, offers a kaleidoscopic panorama of life on Greek polis, Civis Romanus, medieval city-states, and modern citizenship. Also, in this part of the book, the author deems it necessary to address the theoretical discourse of Thomas H. Marshall in the historical approach. His (Marshall) typology of citizenship today in the sociological and legal sciences is considered classical and includes three groups (or generations) of rights: civil citizenship rights, political citizenship rights, and social citizenship rights.

Intensifying the debate and ensuring the polemical character of the thesis, this section deals with the various theoretical and political approaches to citizenship. In this context, the author analyzed the similarities, differences, and complementarity between the republican, liberal, and national paradigm for citizenship. The decent but brief presentation of the historical antecedents of the contemporary debate on citizenship contains a lack of knowledge and presentation of the contemporary views of some of the most important sociologists such as Herman Van Gunsteren, Charles Tilly, John Keane, and others. But what is perhaps more significant to note is that the historical overview of the current state of citizenship in Vasiljevic's book does not note some of the more significant legal and political initiatives that have significantly influenced the debate on citizenship in the West. For example, a serious sociological approach to the theory and practice of citizenship certainly undoubtedly would analyze the *Human rights movements* of the 1960s in the United States, *Meech Lake Accord* (1992), *Charlottetown Accord* (1992), *Official Languages Act* (1969), *Makarrata and Native Title Act* (1993), *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* (all in Canada), *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, and so on.

In the next chapter titled *Argument of Culture in Debates on Citizenship and Civil Rights*, the main interest is focused on the problem of recognition of identity and the affirmative policies of states toward minorities. The problem of citizenship and the recognition of minority (cultural) rights is serious and a carefully balanced policy is needed how to prove by the theoretical and conceptual range that distinguishes several

types of citizenship. Depending on who is the individual holder and what kind of group it is as a right-bearing entity, the author distinguishes *universal*, *cultural*, *differentiated*, and *multicultural* citizenship. Hence, Vasiljevic tries to criticize the normative character of the debate from an anthropological point of view and emphasizes the need for a more comprehensive anthropological approach, which is more sensitive to the role of culture in all debates about minority rights. What is at first glance missing in this section is a more extensive account of the positions of postmodernists and their concept of group-dividing or *differentiated citizenship*. A more representative presentation of the authors of this theoretical orientation should include the names of Bikhu Parek, Vanessa Williams, Matteo Gianni, and the like, and of course the post-colonial critique of the British notion of citizenship should be mentioned – Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

What follows in the next session of the book is an attempt to apply the concepts of citizenship to criticize and evaluate the citizenship policies of some of the countries in the Balkan region. However, the largest analyses are set aside for the Republic of Serbia – the country where Vasiljevic lives and works. It must be immediately pointed out that recent historical developments on the Balkan Peninsula, especially the wars that followed the breakup of Yugoslav socialism, still do not allow for an objective and critical approach to minority rights issues. It is still quite difficult to build an objective view of what is a problem in building democratically stable systems in which the rights of minorities are protected. In the case of Serbia and Kosovo, the author addresses the unfinished business and highlights the unanswered questions, which still have the potential to develop conflicts. That is evident in her ironic subtitles *Citizens of Kosovo –Citizenship of Serbia*. It shows how the processes of Yugoslavia's dissolution, and later the secession of Montenegro from Serbia, influenced the debates over changing Serbia's constitution and further complicating relations with Kosovo – which is still largely perceived by Serbia as a regional, self-proclaimed, and semi-recognized state.

One of the criticisms that can be made of this book is found in this chapter. Unfortunately, an ambitious project to research the issue of citizenship in a regional context (Balkans and countries of former Yugoslavia) – rests only on Serbian diopters.

In the last chapter, Vasiljevic tries to answer the central topic of the book and find how the anthropological approach improves the scientific and objective attitude toward the problem of minority rights and citizenship. It must be emphasized that the discussion of citizenship in this book deals primarily with the problem of the rights of the so-called *identity minority communities* and very little elaborates on the aspects of rights and the situation with *non-identity and socially marginalized minorities*. It must be emphasized that although the theory (or debate) of *differentiated citizenship* is mentioned, the absence of a postmodernist approach that provides a more comprehensive view of minority rights and citizenship is evident, especially in the section dealing with the so-called 'deep diversity'.

However, this book is a bold attempt anthropologically (and sociologically in a sense) to open up the issue of minority rights and citizenship in Balkan context, more importantly to reevaluate and reconsider positions that have hitherto been so confrontational that they do not allow for normal debate on issue.

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