More Is Less: Multiple Citizenship, Political Participation, and Mr Erdogan

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I must differ with my colleague, Peter Spiro, and those who consider dual citizenship unproblematic or even progressive and a facilitator of immigrant integration.The devaluation of citizenship that widespread dual citizenship both reflects and worsens is in fact bad for those who need democracy and seek social equality. It is also another moment in which political power has yielded to market power.At the same time, making dual citizenship illegal, or even discouraging it, is a pointless effort since even after the current nationalist-populist wave passes, human mobility is highly likely to remain at high levels.

The increased mobility of people, goods and money has for years been creating a larger and larger population of dual citizens in the United States, Germany and the EU, Asia, Latin America and around the world. With some countries allocating citizenship on the basis of birthplace and others on the basis of descent, dual citizenship is an inevitable starting point for many a newborn as well as a possibility for many a naturalizing immigrant.

For quite some time, dual citizenship was considered anomalous and undesirable— in the mid-'60s Europeans worked to create rules to reduce its incidence.In recent decades, many countries of immigration have eased their rules for naturalization, hoping to accelerate integration while some countries of emigration have allowed even third-generation emigrants to retain their citizenship as a way of maintaining connections and enticing valuable remittances

Dual citizenship long smacked of bigamy: How could one love, serve and fight for more than one *patrie*? How could one entertain feelings of belonging together, of being part of a community of fate, solidarity and economic redistribution, of giving one's heart and soul to more than one country? How could one vote or serve in something other than one's unique homeland?What, for example, of a spouse from a hostile country or children with confused loyalties? To avoid such problems, women who married foreigners, for example, were often forced to drop their citizenship and adopt their husband's.Many injustices and irrationalities could ensue.

But times have changed. Developed countries seldom fight wars against each other. Countries as diverse as Israel, Poland, the Dominican Republic and China now consider their emigrants to be assets abroad rather than deserters. The U.S. State Department effectively ignores that part of the naturalization oath that calls for abjuring all other loyalties, and the U.S. is not alone in this.

The redistributional welfare state where we are expected to care for fellow citizens is under attack everywhere: we don't feel much solidarity for others in the neo-liberal market economy; we simply ask for nondiscrimination, obedience to the law, and enforceable contracts.

Yet, there is a great disjuncture between elites and the anxious rest of us. For today's cosmopolitans, at home in airport lounges and shopping malls around the world, and regardless of whether they stand left, right or center politically, citizenships are like credit cards, different ones in the wallet being better for different uses. Green Cards and gold cards now serve similar purposes.When Spiro writes that today "migration looks more like a process than a destination," he is describing globalization's elites and beneficiaries (of the sort described by our colleague Ayelet Shachar), not the masses, not even the temporary guest workers who have become Europe's largest immigrant population.The latter are not "external citizens"; they are the uprooted and the displaced.

Economic and cultural elites are different from the vast majority of people, who have no assets to deploy, other than the domestic democratic process. For them, the weakening of the nation state and its command of singular loyalties is a loss, a loss of the only kind of tie and commitment that might counter the money and influence of elites — namely, the potential equality and commands of citizenship.The Left, as we know, is divided on this question, with the prevailing view, at least until very recently, being like Spiro's, favoring the transnational and cosmopolitan. Voices like that of Wolfgang Streeck, favoring reinvigoration of market-balancing nationalism, have remained in the minority.

But there is, alas, in my view no "globalized democracy" of the kind suggested by Spiro being served by "public political activities," and the crisis of the EU itself is in no small measure about the failure to create even a limited "multi-state democracy."And what of the immigrants to the individual democracies we do still have?Spiro writes, "Dual citizenship in migrant populations helps reflect and facilitate integration."

I am not persuaded by either the logic or the data.Spiro's position is like that of Rainer Bauböck, who in a recent interview for this blog maintained that "*Die richtige Antwort auf die Unterstützung autoritärer Herkunftsregime durch manche Einwanderer ist es, sie für die deutsche Rechtsordnung und Demokratie zu gewinnen*." Based on what we see in the classic immigrant-receiving countries, this is false: One becomes a liberal democrat in Canada, the US, Australia, etc. while as a member of diaspora X comes to support the most reactionary and nationalistic forces "back home".*See* Mexican, Israeli, Irish, Sri Lankan, Indian, Kenyan, Salvadoran, Brazilian, Korean and endless other dual nationals.Canada, home to immigrants from so many different lands, demonstrates an awareness of this in its opposition to external voting.

And that is the reason Erdogan and his surrogates have come to fish in Germany and the Netherlands:they sense more support for their project among the diaspora than even at home.Whether this is psychological compensation for having "defected" or an indication of being out of touch, I do not know. But I suspect that the quicker Turkish Germans leave Turkish politics behind, the sooner they will be successful and liberal Germans of Turkish culture and ethnicity.The menacing threats experienced by Cem Özdemir and other Germans of Turkish descent who oppose Erdogan – apparently a small minority – suggest that this process has a long way to go still and has little to do with the requirements for birthright citizenship, naturalization or integration in Germany — all of which have been significantly liberalized over the last twenty years.It may be fine to have residual dual or multiple citizenships, a place to go or return to if necessary, but no political voice or representation should be allowed without permanent residence and real, ongoing stakeholding!

Finally, the problem of Erdogan's free speech rights becomes much less interesting, above all to him, when only Turks transiently in Germany rather than millions of Turkish Germans are his constituents and would-be electoral supporters.

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