

**Remembering Rachel Fuchs:
Transnational mentor and co-editor *par excellence*¹**

Anne R. Epstein

Our volume, *Gender and Citizenship in Historical and Transnational Perspective: Agency, Space, Borders*, was in production when I got the devastating news in October 2016 that my co-editor and mentor Rachel Fuchs had passed away. The book's story is also the story of our transnational collaboration, which took shape over the years within and between specific spaces and places: Indiana University; Tempe, Arizona; Helsinki, Finland; and Strasbourg, France; as well as Parisian bistros, European Social Science History Conferences (ESSHC), and assorted academic gatherings in the U.S. and Europe.

Rachel and I initially began working together in the wake of a tragedy that touched us both. As a doctoral student at Indiana writing a thesis on women intellectuals in the French Third Republic, I knew and admired her work. But we had never crossed paths when the sudden death in November 2002 of my dissertation director, William B. Cohen, left me without an advisor. Earlier that fall I had returned to the US from Finland, where I had been living while carrying out my research. I had hoped to complete and submit my thesis by the end of 2002, to avoid having to revalidate my exams. Overwhelmed by circumstances, I now started wondering if I should just quit. But word must have spread that some of Bill's students lacked mentors. Rachel – herself an Indiana alumna, former Cohen student, and specialist in modern French women's and social history – stepped up to the plate, and IU approved her as my new research director. At the time her gesture astonished me, but when I got to know her I realized it was pure Rachel. Thus began our collaboration. I was and will always be grateful.

We first met in person in June 2003, when we were both doing research in Paris, and we agreed I would try to defend by the end of the year. Rachel's sabbatical that fall gave her flexibility and the time difference between Tempe and Helsinki worked in our favor. I would write all day and send her new text in the evening, my time, and it would be in my inbox, carefully edited with detailed comments, the next morning. With immediate feedback on my work, my motivation returned, and I became disciplined and productive. Thanks to Rachel, I successfully defended in Bloomington in January 2004.

Living abroad, I seldom attended conferences in the US, but we met in Paris at the 50th anniversary meeting of the Society for French Historical Studies in June 2004, and participated in a session together at the Western Society for French History meeting in Long Beach in 2006. Once I relocated to Strasbourg in 2006, Rachel's research trips to Paris enabled us to meet more frequently. She always scouted for the right place in advance: a quiet neighborhood bistro off the beaten track, simple but impeccably prepared food, the perfect setting for long chats over a bottle of good red.... Her speaking engagements in Europe and various conferences and

¹ I thank Jean Elisabeth Pedersen, David Kammerling Smith, and Elinor Accampo for inviting me to participate in this issue of *H-France Salon*, and for editorial guidance throughout the writing of this essay.

workshops later provided additional opportunities to catch up, work on *Gender and Citizenship* together, and even recruit contributors: an international conference in Denmark in 2013, a conference in Rachel's honor in Tempe in 2014, and especially the ESSHC, which Rachel attended in 2012 and in 2016, accompanied by her husband Norman. It was at the 2016 meeting in Valencia that I enjoyed what I never suspected would be a last, memorable dinner with the two of them together, and where Rachel, I, and three other contributors organized a session around the book just before it went to press.

Reflecting back on how *Gender and Citizenship in Historical and Transnational Perspective* took shape, I think Rachel would agree that we had no master plan. Although we shared a commitment to women's and gender history and a fascination with French history and culture, our strengths and specific interests seemed more complementary than convergent, and it took time to figure out we could build on that.

Rachel's earlier work had not focused explicitly on citizenship. However, agency, one of three structuring concepts in our *Gender and Citizenship* volume, was already an important theme in her 1992 book, *Poor and Pregnant in Paris: Strategies for Survival in the Nineteenth Century*. Her 2000 article, "Seduction, Paternity and the Law in Fin de Siècle France," introduced the idea of a tension between women's real-life agency and the passive citizenship attributed to them in written law, a line of inquiry she further pursued in her award-winning 2008 book, *Contested Paternity: Constructing Families in Modern France*, which she had been working on while supervising my dissertation work in 2003. Both in the introduction to *Contested Paternity*, and in a 2010 article in the volume *Confronting Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle France: Bodies, Minds and Gender*, co-edited by Christopher Forth and Elinor Accampo, Rachel also moved cautiously toward a more flexible understanding of citizenship. In the former, she suggested that women initiating paternity suits in court *might* have been exercising a kind of autonomy and citizenship based on their subjective rights as "good mothers" and/or "innocent victims," even though as women, they were not considered active citizens. In the latter, she alluded specifically to women's right to work and their right "as citizens" to hold court hearings and conclude contracts.² Her careful wording suggests she might have liked to couch her findings more firmly in the language of citizenship but didn't yet feel comfortable with the conceptual leap required to place less formal, subjective rights based on membership, and the legal rights of "active" citizenship, on a par or even on a continuum.

I had not initially conceptualized my research in terms of citizenship, either. However – although I did not use the term explicitly – agency was also central in my doctoral thesis, which analyzes how our understanding of Third Republic political and intellectual culture changes if we look at women's civic engagement alongside that of the prominent men who, at the turn of the 20th century, came to be labeled *intellectuels*, or public intellectuals (a concept that long remained associated with masculinity in France). The turning point for me, and possibly our book's story, came during my dissertation defense, when committee member Maria Bucur, who had been working in the area and would contribute a chapter on economic citizenship to our volume, helpfully suggested that I frame my future publications around citizenship instead

² *Poor and Pregnant in Paris: strategies for survival in the nineteenth century* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992); "Seduction, Paternity and the Law in Fin de Siècle France," *The Journal of Modern History* 72:4 (December 2000), 989; *Contested Paternity: Constructing Families in Modern France* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 7; "Paternity, Progeny, and Property: Changing Concepts of Masculinity in Third Republic France" in Christopher Forth and Elinor Accampo, eds., *Confronting Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle France: Bodies, Minds and Gender* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire England: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2010), 152.

of focusing only on the gender dynamics of French intellectual and political culture. A thought-provoking discussion ensued and the committee, including Rachel, supported her suggestion. Degree in hand, I started investigating feminist theories of citizenship. In France, my teaching duties and project research on contemporary Europe eventually required that I familiarize myself with additional aspects of political theory, the sociology of international relations, EU history, and studies of education, identity and mobility, and through my involvement with the ESSHC Politics, Citizenship, and Nations network I became interested in transnational approaches, the history of citizenship, and new work on post-national, cultural, and other perspectives on citizenship.

Some of the themes and concepts our co-edited volume would explore had thus begun taking shape in our minds by early 2011, when I started planning a roundtable on gender and citizenship for the 2012 ESSHC in Glasgow. Rachel agreed to participate, but asked for input on what to speak about. By this time I believe we had already discussed citizenship in her work, and possibly the idea of the courts as “spaces” for practicing citizenship. Knowing she wanted to work from existing material, I returned to *Contested Paternity*. The book suggested to me that even individuals considered to stand “outside the conjugal unit,” as Rachel had put it (i.e. those excluded from the familial models of citizenship so dear to republicans) *could* make claims on and/or interact creatively with the state as citizens, or otherwise call into question existing models. Might this serve as her starting point? She liked the idea. This excerpt from her draft abstract gives a sense of her evolving thought on citizenship, in her own words:

Although denied many rights and responsibilities of citizenship that men held, such as the right to vote and hold office, women, by their very actions exercised other and different rights of citizenship, such as bringing legal suits. They interacted in creative ways with the laws and with state officials, calling into question, and even challenging and changing, long-accepted definitions of citizenship.... Women and men, used the laws and the courts in novel ways, often unintended by the lawmakers, to obtain rights—rights over their families, their bodies, and their property. Exercising citizenship is not just having the right to vote; it is much more nuanced than that. As historians, we therefore need to redefine citizenship, taking into account how women defined it for themselves, as I will discuss.³

Three other panelists spoke about emergent forms of citizenship in other national contexts, and my presentation, “Connecting conversations about gender injustice and citizenship: ‘transnational feminism’ in the *Revue de morale sociale* (1899-1903),” analyzed the imbrication of the transnational and the national in the production and circulation of knowledge about gendered citizenship, a theme also present in our volume.⁴

Following the session, Rachel suggested I join her at an informal meeting with the editor of Palgrave’s Gender and History series, the collection in which she and Victoria Thompson had published the first book, *Women in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. I hedged. She insisted. Off we went. The editor inquired about Rachel’s current work, and about mine. We discussed the conference, and developments in the field. Then came the fateful question: did we have any ideas in mind for a future publication? Rachel turned to me, “Anne, do we have any ideas about

³ Personal communication, April 25, 2011.

⁴ Although the session went quite well, we had no plan for a book when we put it together, and the other presentations did not end up fitting within the transnational framework of *Gender and Citizenship*.

a future publication?” I stared at her. We had not discussed any publications. I blurted out the first thing that came into my head: “What about something on gender and citizenship ... in historical ... and transnational... perspective?”

Conceptually and theoretically, as well as in its geographical and chronological coverage, the volume that we ultimately proposed to Palgrave pushed us both beyond our comfort zones. Our starting point was broad: the history of gender and citizenship. But rather than framing this history in the traditional terms of T.H. Marshall – that is, focusing on citizenship-as-status and on civil, political, and social rights within specific national contexts – we opted to conceptualize citizenship more flexibly, as membership of a political community. We felt this better accounted both for dimensions of citizenship that might not derive from rights, and also for the forms of partial or differentiated citizenship often attributed to groups such as women, children, migrants or minorities. However, the decision to shift attention away from the nation-state did not lead us to the history of transnational citizenship, an intriguing but contested concept with which the volume does not engage. Rather, we chose to take a transnational perspective on the historical evolution of gendered aspects of citizenship, for two compelling reasons. First, we posited, and the essays demonstrate, that citizenship has evolved historically as both concept and legal category in an environment that extends beyond the nation-state. Both legal citizenship and the aspirational and experiential forms of citizenship that the contributions to our volume document are grounded in the tension between universalist imaginaries and the exclusionary values and imperatives of nation- and empire-building. Second, because gender is a primary category of social differentiation that transcends not only territorial boundaries, but also socioeconomic, cultural, political, racial and other frontiers, a transnational (as opposed to cross-national or comparative) perspective seemed likely to offer maximal insight into the evolution of gendered citizenship during a period when national and imperial borders were perpetually shifting, and people and ideas were constantly crossing borders.

In tandem with gender, the cross-cutting themes of agency, space and borders – separately and in combination – provide not only a structure for the book, but also the means to analyze the evolution of citizenship as concept, as experience, and as legal category: a framework that is open-ended enough to apply across different historical and geopolitical settings. As historians we were interested in change over time, and the dynamics of law, imaginaries, and experience in shaping citizenship. Our hunch was that these would be most visible in moments of transition, when borders shifted or people and ideas crossed them, or when new spaces for action and practice emerged, all of which, singly or in combination, might produce or result from agency.

We assembled a group of contributors whose research focus and approach to the history of citizenship appeared compatible with this framework, and who worked on various parts of the world and in different time frames. Most are historians, but several of the essays combine a historical perspective with approaches from anthropology, ethnic studies, gender studies and political science. The chapters move from post-Revolutionary France (Jennifer Ngairé Heuer) through to nineteenth-century Morocco (Chouki El Hamel) and imperial Russia (Barbara A. Engel), and on to twentieth-century Romania (Maria Bucur), Argentina (Donna J. Guy), India (Anupama Roy), Japan (Barbara Molony), the French Union (Lorelle Semley), Cold War Europe (Chiara Bonfiglioli), and contemporary Taiwan (Sara L. Friedman).

Three intersecting arguments shape the essay collection as a whole. On the most general level, the volume posits that a comprehensive history of citizenship needs to focus simultaneously on its informal and its formal dimensions: for example, on participation, expression, recognition,

belonging, values, agency, and subjectivity, as well as on legal status, rights, duties, and the institutions through which these are granted, exercised, claimed, and implemented. The second contention is that gender, as a primary category of differentiation among citizens and would-be citizens (usually imbricated with others such as race, ethnicity, position with the family, religion, sexuality, level of education, social status, ability and others) that transcends national borders, is of central importance for understanding the history of the concept of citizenship, its legal and political workings, and the subjective dimensions of citizenship as experienced. Thirdly, and related to our second contention, we argue that to fully grasp how citizenship, as a concept and as a legal and political status, has evolved over time, requires an approach that encompasses both transnational and national perspectives and different kinds of regimes, democratic and not: nation-states and republics as well as supranational political entities, multinational empires and trans-border contexts.

Overall, our transnational approach revealed how entangled nation-centered and what I will call non-nation-specific aspects of citizenship are and have been. Together our contributions suggest that while certain features of citizenship do appear transnational—in the sense of either reaching or traveling across borders (e.g. political imaginaries), or occurring in multiple locations, contemporaneously or not (e.g. claims-making practices and the subjective, often gender-inflected grounds for making claims or exercising agency; or the sources of restrictions on citizenship, such as gender, family and kinship relationships or membership of minority groups)—the legal frameworks, norms and particularities of citizenship that have shaped most people’s daily existence have been primarily national. Individually, however, the authors demonstrate how, in different historical and geopolitical contexts and under very different kinds of regimes, particularly during moments of transition and change and often in connection with transnational phenomena, the dynamics of agency, space, and borders have produced gendered political subjectivities and aspirations that could transform national citizenship. Only readers can judge whether the book fulfills its ambitious aim of providing a novel way to think, through gender, about the overall development of citizenship in past societies, but the collection as a whole offers fresh insight into the history of citizenship and the evolution of the modern state, as well as opening new vistas for historians and other scholars of political life.

Rachel’s death two months before the publication of *Gender and Citizenship in Historical and Transnational Perspective: Agency, Space, Borders* came as a terrible shock to everyone who had worked with her on it. Her gifts as a scholar and an editor, her warmth, her professionalism, and her caring concern for others had marked us all, and we were deeply saddened that she never got to see the book she put so much into in print. In a gesture we knew was hopelessly inadequate, we dedicated it to her.

Although I had transitioned from “mentee” to colleague, I continued to learn from Rachel as we worked on the book, and I will always remember her as a mentor *par excellence*. Establishing a kind of intellectual *complicité*, in the French sense of friendship rather than collusion (though sometimes a bit of that also!), was for her an essential part of scholarly cooperation. She accepted people as they were, and had an extraordinary ability to make those with whom she worked feel respected, trusted, and valued, more like friends and confidants than workmates. When we started working together, such intensive collaboration was something new and wonderful for me. I realized only too late how rare it is. Rachel’s boundless energy, intellectual curiosity, discipline, and deep commitment to scholarship and the profession could make her a tough act to follow, but they went hand in hand with a now-legendary generosity and dedication to students and colleagues, family and friends that often brought her to place others’ interests first. Understanding this made those who worked with

her want to try that much harder even if—or precisely because—they knew she would be much more forgiving with them than she was with herself.

I feel fortunate to have known Rachel and co-edited *Gender and Citizenship in Historical and Transnational Perspective* with her. I hope the book gives colleagues a chance to discover another facet of her wide-ranging scholarly interests. Her openness to new intellectual challenges was truly inspiring – indeed, awe-inspiring. It made the book possible.

Gender and Citizenship in Historical and Transnational Perspective: Agency, Space, Borders

Table of Contents

Introduction

Anne R. Epstein and Rachel G. Fuchs

Part 1: Agency

Citizenship, the French Revolution, and the Limits of Martial Masculinity

Jennifer Ngaire Heuer

Family Despotism and the Rights of the Person [*lichnost'*]: The Politics of the Personal in Late Imperial Russia

Barbara A. Engel

Gender and the Politics of Morality in Japan: A Comparison of the Suffrage Movement in the Interwar Era with Feminist Electoral Politics of the 1970s

Barbara Molony

Part 2: Space

Patriarchy and Women's Resistance in Morocco on the Eve of Colonialism

Chouki El Hamel

Charisma in the Modern Age: The Case of Argentina and Latin America, 1946-2015

Donna J. Guy

Liminal *and* Legible: Gendered Citizenship and State-Formative Practices in the 1950s

Anupama Roy

Part 3: Borders

Economics of Citizenship: Gender Regimes and Property Rights in Romania in the 20th Century

Maria Bucur

Cold War Gendered Imaginaries of Citizenship and Transnational Women's Activism: The Case of the Movie *Die Windrose* (1957)

Chiara Bonfiglioli

Women Citizens of the French Union Unite! Jane Vialle's Post-War Crusade
Lorelle Semley

Right to Family: Chinese Marriage Immigrants, Chinese Children, and Graduated Citizenship
in Taiwan
Sara L. Friedman

Conclusion: Conceptualizing Citizenship
Anne R. Epstein and Rachel G. Fuchs

Copyright © 2017 by H-France, all rights reserved. H-France permits the electronic distribution of individual reviews for nonprofit educational purposes, provided that full and accurate credit is given to the author, the date of publication, and the location of the review on the H-France website. H-France reserves the right to withdraw the license for redistribution/republication of individual reviews at any time and for any specific case. Neither bulk redistribution/republication in electronic form of more than five percent of the contents of H-France Salon nor re-publication of any amount in print form will be permitted without permission. For any other proposed uses, contact the Editor-in-Chief of H-France.

H-France Salon
Volume 9 (2017), Issue #18, #8