

Towards Citizenship at Work?

An Introduction

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Harry Arthurs (1967) expressed much of the optimism for labour's long march to full civil, political and social rights in modern industrial societies in his 1960s path-breaking article "Developing Industrial Citizenship: A Challenge for Canada's Second Century". His reading offers a compelling narrative of the evolution of labour law in Canada, both past and future, as the gradual and necessary affirmation of industrial citizenship. T.H. Marshall (1949) had already traced the development of the different dimensions of citizenship rights in a highly influential reading of two centuries of industrial progress achieved by British workers. Although such a citizenship was not yet fully achieved, its main traits were increasingly evident in the development of both the postwar welfare state and in the increasing maturity of an autonomous body of collective labour law (see, for example, Kahn-Freund, 1954). Arthurs built on this vision and undoubtedly echoed some of the pervasive optimism of the period in foreseeing a seemingly inevitable and necessary affirmation of collective rights in the economic sphere, which he labelled "industrial citizenship". Just as Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison and Myers (1960) viewed the maturation of industrial societies towards stable forms of industrial pluralism in the world of work, in which legitimately contending collective rights would come to form agreed norms on the basis of recognized collective rights, so Arthurs anticipated a future trajectory for Canadian public policy on work and collective labour law.

This vision was predicated on the crystallisation of these collective labour rights. Underpinned by the pluralism of collective actors at the (industrial) workplace, it was an integral part of a broader framework of economic and social citizenship towards which societies should and would evolve. Thus this traditional notion of industrial citizenship embraced a view

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of the progressive extension of the realm of freedom for workers: first, in the form of individual political rights, gradually entailing universal suffrage by the early twentieth century; then, as in the establishment of collective labour rights in contrast to the primacy of property rights, such as the positive right to associate for the purposes of negotiating terms and conditions of work and in the promotion of collective associations for workers to face the corporations that they worked for; and, finally, to social rights associated with the implantation of the welfare state in the post-World-War- II period, such as economic and social security for all including access to healthcare and education. In the field of industrial relations, both collective bargaining and the provision of collective and individual rights by the state as a means for ensuring the true exercise of this industrial citizenship were bound to grow.

In retrospect, one cannot but be struck by the way that this roadmap to the future, encapsulated as industrial citizenship, constituted a paradigm for the fields of industrial relations, labour law and public policies about work. Among the core premises which rallied consent, that labour is not a commodity, that it is invested of human agency and that such humanity, sometimes in opposition to the operation of the market, must be recognized in the ways that legitimately contending social actors create norms, procedures and rules about work. Not only has the idea of industrial citizenship served as a normative template for judging the success of work relations in industrial systems but it has increasingly made its way into international instruments defining fundamental human rights. Arthur's article is therefore an important intellectual landmark of where we once thought we might go, and readers would do well to savour it anew, but most observers, including Arthurs himself (1996 and 1999), would now readily agree that this is not exactly where we went.

The workplace in Canada and elsewhere has changed significantly over the past decades and the pace of change appears to be ever accelerating. New information and communications technologies (Castells, 1996), the increasing internationalization of the production of goods and services (Held, 1995), a revolution in the management of production and work organization (Murray et al., 2002), the dis- and relocation of workplaces across both time and space (Stone, 2004) and the multiplication and fragmentation of individual and collective social identities in and beyond the workplace (Francfort et al., 1995, Piore, 1995) are just some of the factors driving these changes. The extent of change, moreover, leads to an increasing "disconnect" between, on the one hand, the prevailing institutional framework for work and employment and the sets of assumptions that informed it, and, on the other hand, these current changes sweeping the world of work.

The notion of industrial citizenship was rooted in an older model of production and predicated on assumptions increasingly open to question. The workers concerned by the notion of collective labour rights tended to be in a predominantly male realm of formal labour market activity, according to a model of full-time, permanent employment, as opposed to an overwhelmingly female realm of unpaid domestic labour concerned with caring and social reproduction (Fudge and Vosko, 2001). Given this bias towards manufacturing and longer job tenure with the same employer, it was also assumed that the bulk of employees would be represented collectively by trade unions. Yet, changes in the distribution of employment, the organization of work into more fragmented units, and the relative decline of collective representation raise important questions about both job quality and collective representation about work. At the very least it is no longer sufficient to speak of industrial citizenship because work is largely beyond the confines of “industry”. More tellingly again, these changes suggest a rethinking of the boundaries of work, raising gender issues about work beyond the formal labour market.

Similarly, the growing assertion of other individual and collective identities (gender, ethnicity, sexuality, “professionalism”) has led to a much stronger emphasis on the codification of other rights, especially equality rights, with important consequences for collective labour law. While collective labour law once offered an encompassing and even self-sufficient paradigm for the understanding of citizenship at work, the affirmation of new identities and the multiplication of instances to ensure their expression, application and interpretation have challenged this traditional paradigm. The competing institutional interpretations of such citizenship are sometimes complementary to the traditional expression of collective labour rights, but also sometimes in conflict (Vallée, Coutu and Hébert, 2002).

Finally, the redefinition of the role of the state in many industrialized economies has also challenged prevailing notions of economic and social security, opposing notions of individual responsibility to those of collective entitlement. The institutional arrangements that underlay the citizenship of collective entitlement expressed past trade-offs between the organized working class and the state that no longer apply in the same way. And such rights were based on modes of governance in national territories rather than on transversal notions of human rights and global citizenship.

This affirmation of a wider range of individual and collective social and professional identities, the implantation of new organizational models for the production of goods and services and the increasing transnationalization of economic and social relations therefore open up rich avenues of enquiry as regards how we might appropriately define citizenship at work in a global era.

Such is the point of departure for this special issue of *Relations industrielles/Industrial Relations*. Drawing on a range of original contributions, it seeks to set out some of the pathways for thinking about citizenship at work. Under the auspices of its Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Major Collaborative Research Initiatives (SSHRC-MCRI) project on rethinking institutions for work and employment in a global era, the Inter-University Research Centre on Globalization and Work (CRIMT – Université de Montréal, Université Laval, HEC Montréal), in cooperation with a range of labour market and public policy partners, issued a call for papers to be presented at its June 2004 international colloquium on Citizenship at Work: Thinking the Workplace of the Future.¹ Organized by CRIMT and held at Université Laval, this colloquium featured a range of original papers and contributions, stemming from a selection of both the responses to our call for papers and invited contributions from leading academic specialists and labour market partners. The articles in this special issue of *RI/IR* are those that were subsequently reviewed by external referees.² In the remainder of this introduction, we set out and assess some of the pathways that emerge from this diverse and rich collection of studies.

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Although the concept of citizenship can be powerfully resonant in its articulations to both democracy and the State, it is also a vessel that carries many meanings (Schnapper, 1997a: 73)—all the more so when applied to the realm of work. Multiple derivations are at play: industrial citizenship, social citizenship, organizational and firm citizenship and global citizenship, to name just a few. At the very least, some attempt to achieve greater conceptual clarity would seem to be in order.

The concept of citizenship can be descriptive; it can also be normative or prescriptive. Sometimes, it is used in both ways, even without distinction.

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2. A second stream of invited papers, surveying key themes and dimensions of citizenship, will soon be published in book form: *Travail et citoyenneté: Quel avenir?; Broken Paradigms: Rethinking Citizenship at Work in a Global Era*.

When the idea of citizenship expresses a project or an ideal or even a utopian aspiration, as with Habermas's (1996, 2000) supranational citizenship, then its use is normative. When used to give an empirical take on the current state of affairs, as with both T.H. Marshall (1949) and Schnapper (1997, 2002), then it is descriptive. Even if values inevitably inform the way that this current state of affairs might be interpreted, the descriptive approach is focused on a sociological account of the evolution of citizenship—how things are—as opposed to a philosophical or moral interpretation—as in how things should be.

Another way of conceptualizing citizenship opposes identity to status. Status refers to the socio-legal status of a group of individuals as regards, for example, their fundamental rights (civil, political, social, cultural, etc.). In contrast, identity concerns the sense of belonging, as manifested by an individual relative to some larger entity, be it the national state or a religious, ethnic, linguistic or cultural community. The work of T.H. Marshall is largely concerned with citizenship status, inasmuch as the focus is on the basic rights achieved historically by English citizens. Schnapper, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with citizenship identity because she focuses on the social relations between members of a community of citizens as the source of a sense of political citizenship.

Locating discussions of citizenship along both of these axes provides some degree of conceptual clarity as it is possible to situate authors in any one of the four cells of the matrix. Habermas, for example, is easily located in terms of both the normative and identity dimensions of citizenship whereas T.H. Marshall's work is both descriptive and concerned with status (Hassenteufel, 1996).

The objective is certainly not to promote one or another of these possible conceptual tandems but rather to invite greater clarity in the way that we think about citizenship at work. Each of these dimensions is useful but it is necessary to think about the different kinds of analysis that they entail.

There is, moreover, yet another degree of complexity in this discussion, and herein resides at least some of the richness to be found in the contributions to this special issue. One of the reasons that citizenship offers so many meanings is because the concept is itself in movement—the subject of continuous negotiation among social actors. The evolutionary take offered by T.H. Marshall highlights the gradual acquisition of basic rights and how the formal equality of civil rights conflicted with socio-economic inequalities of social class, hence the growing importance of new social rights and the search for more significant forms of equality. Similarly, while Arthurs' methodological posture in his 1967 article was largely descriptive

and explanatory, it also expressed an ideal—a vision for the future—which, although it was not be achieved in the short or medium term for the reasons explored above, remains a powerful statement of what could be (Coutu, 2004). Indeed, we think that it is precisely this tension between what is and what should be that provides a roadmap for the evolution of public policies on work.

The same can be said of the tension between status and identity. We emphasized above the importance of the proliferation of identities related to working lives. The question to some degree is whether status is conferred on these identities? This is exactly the line of analysis at the core of much of the research on equality in an era of charter rights. In many ways, the current period is an ongoing experiment in the negotiation between status and identity. Stasiulis and Bakan (2005), for example, offer a fascinating study of citizenship on the part of migrant women workers in Canada. This is a case of a variety of identities in search of status—those of women, of persons of colour, of workers, of nationality—but the recognition of such identities must be mobilized by social actors. In this sense, it is a continuous process, still far from being achieved and indeterminate in terms of final results, but yet a project informed by the understandings of these persons in their multiple identities.

The interest in discussions about citizenship at work flows then from this understanding of the tensions between what is and what should be, and between the affirmation of identities and their lack of recognition in terms of status. That the world of work is undergoing a tremendous period of change and that we can observe huge gaps between what is and what could or should be is a veritable convocation to think about the negotiation of citizenship at work by both people at work and those excluded from it. Such negotiations concern both of the axes of citizenship explored above: identity as well as status; in both descriptive and normative dimensions. This is certainly the vocation of one of the cross-cutting themes in CRIMT's own research program; it is also the motive behind the organization of an International Colloquium on Citizenship at Work and this special issue of *RI/IR*. Let us now turn to the detailed contents of this special issue.

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Judy Fudge's article offers a scintillating overview of the evolution of citizenship at work in Canada. She perceives the erosion of the notion of "industrial citizenship", at least as it was understood in the post-World-War-II period. In referring to the work of Harry Arthurs (1967), Fudge defines industrial citizenship as a status limiting the commodification of labour. This status is based on a range of both individual and collective

rights and it is inextricably linked to the development of an interventionist welfare state. Through an historical overview of this industrial citizenship regime in Canada, Fudge emphasizes its limited scope (particularly for women) and its weak institutionalization. The origins of this regime can be dated to the affirmation of the right to unionize and the institutionalization of collective bargaining. It should, however, be kept in mind that this was a male breadwinner model, indifferent—and so too were unions at the time—to the rights of women. The 1960s and 1970s were in many ways the golden age of industrial citizenship in Canada. The unionization of public sector workers, progress in the struggles against discrimination at work and multiple reforms in minimum standards and health and safety at work were just a few of the accomplishments. From the 1980s onwards, however, with the rise of neo-liberalism, free trade and public sector financial constraints, we witness a return to market constraint, exacerbated even further by the dynamics of globalization, a decline in levels of unionization, deteriorating working conditions and a rise in precarious work, all of which have as backdrop a crisis of the Welfare State. Fudge then identifies two scenarios for industrial citizenship in the future: market citizenship, characterized by rampant individualism, the permeability of social safety nets and the commercialization of work; and citizenship at work, which is not just limited to employment but would include all forms of work. These scenarios are meant to illustrate possible but opposing visions of the future evolution of our industrial citizenship regime. What is essential in Fudge's view is that any future conception of citizenship as it relates to work must be able to respond to the triple challenge of globalization, neo-liberalism and feminization of the workforce.

The contribution of Peter Berg and Ann Frost focuses on “dignity at work”, as it relates to low wage and low skill service sector workers. Dignity at work here refers to equitable treatment in the workplace, economic security and a job that is intrinsically satisfying. On the basis of a study of hospital workers in the United States, the authors assess the effects of workplace characteristics on dignity at work, as experienced by these low wage and low skill healthcare workers. Drawing on the classic contributions on job quality, Berg and Frost hypothesize as regards conditions leading to low levels of dignity at work. These include: monotonous and intellectually under stimulating work; economic insecurity, as measured by low pay; and inequitable treatment, in terms of disrespectful and arbitrary behaviour on the part of managers. In fact, Berg and Frost find that changes in work organization, at least as envisaged in the high-performance work organization literature, appear to have little impact on the experience of dignity at work; rather, it is the presence or absence of training that seems to make a difference. Unionization per se is also not a predictor of dignity; though the

higher levels of pay associated with a stronger union role in a workplace do exert a positive impact on the experience of dignity at work. Consistent with Hodson's (2001) findings on what reinforces organizational citizenship, adequate resources to accomplish the job also have a positive impact, whereas excessive workload exerts the opposite effect. In identifying a set of minimum conditions associated with what might be labelled decent work, the authors are thus able to make a key contribution in terms of developing citizenship at work for the low paid and low skilled.

Marie-Josée Legault's article uses the lens of identity politics to consider the new challenges for the union movement. Her particular concern relates to the segmentation of collective union identities in the context of the growing diversity of the unionized workforce. Through their specific recognition of the rights of minorities in the workplace, charters of human rights certainly reinforce the continuing diversification of interests and values. These include targeted groups (women and visible minorities) coming under the ambit of equal access programs and young workers who are victims of intergenerational disparities because of the implementation of two-tier systems of wages and benefits. Legault explores with acuity how notions of equality, as expressed in charters of rights, conflict with equivalent notions used by union organizations that posit a similarity of interest of all members in a bargaining unit. Claims made by minority groups within a union are thus a source of conflict because they often question the prevailing majority rule that is at the core of union democracy. Be it in terms of equal access programs, sexual harassment or work-family balance, these policies can engender tensions within the workforce because they are seen by some to "favour" particular interests, notably those of women workers. To illustrate yet further these tensions, Legault also explores how two-tier wage systems have led to the creation of autonomous groupings dedicated to the defence of young workers. These groupings operate fully outside of formal mechanisms of union governance. This segmentation of collective identities certainly influences unions. In the place of a model of industrial citizenship centred on the union, as officially constituted, we see emerging claims for a new "union citizenship" on the part of workers belonging to these identity groups. Of course, writes Legault, conflicts of interests (and values) have always cut across union ranks. What is new in the era of charters of rights, however, is the emergence of judicial arenas, beyond the scope of traditional labour law, where such conflicts can be arbitrated. Only the future will tell how union organizations and their representatives succeed in managing these conflicts, at the same time as they preserve their capacity for action vis-à-vis employers.

David Peetz's contribution considers the free rider problem in the context of Australian labour relations. For Peetz, industrial citizenship

entails both rights and responsibilities: notably, the right to benefit from collective representation; but also responsible behaviour with regard to other members of a group of workers. Herein lies the thorny question at the heart of Peetz's study as to how to achieve balance between collectivism and individualism. Peetz doubts the plausibility of the Putnam (2000) hypothesis as regards a secular decline of social capital in western nations. Instead, he believes that the rise of a free rider problem in Australia is attributable to a neo-liberal legislative agenda which has prohibited both compulsory unionism and the payment for union services by non-union members. In his view, not only does this situation lead to injustices in the balance between the rights and the responsibilities of citizens at work, but it skews the kind of trade-offs that should be made between individuals and the collectivity in the regulation of their work. When the Australian case is compared with that of Canada, where the most prevalent practice is the institutionalization of the Rand formula, i.e. the compulsory payment of union fees, Peetz suggests that both legislative change and modifications in union practices will be necessary to right the imbalances now experienced by Australian workers.

In focusing on the impact of globalization on the Mexican economy, Arnulfo Arteaga Garcia points to the need for the emergence of new forms of citizenship. Current economic transformations have had a profound impact on both the working and living conditions of Mexican workers. Arteaga's study investigates trends in four different economic sectors. While Mexican manufacturing exhibits many of the features of modern so-called high-performance production systems, these new managerial practices do not necessarily translate into improved working conditions and greater citizenship through participation in economic decisions in the workplace. By its very nature, the growth of the informal sector, which is of huge importance in most developing economies, escapes legal regulation and is often characterized by illegal activities: it is therefore difficult to apply notions of citizenship at work to this part of the economy. This is also the case of a third economic sector – that of the fifth of the overall Mexican workforce who are migrant workers in the United States. They might be seen as a natural extension of the Mexican informal economy inasmuch as their illegal status provides an abundant supply of cheap labour for American employers. Finally, one might think that the high tech employment in the new economy corresponds to an idyll of knowledge work whereas, in fact, these workers are most often poorly paid, engaged in routine work (such as call centres) and, due to their precariousness, have little access to legal protections at work. For Arteaga, globalization therefore heralds increasing numerical and functional flexibility for Mexican workers who face both a climate of uncertainty and exclusion from basic forms of protection at work.

Indeed, in his view, the dismantling of the social state further undermines the classic evolutionary narrative of citizenship at work, as suggested by T. H. Marshall. According to Arteaga, the solution to this state of affairs must involve a more full-blown development of global citizenship, which can only be the result of the efforts of social actors to move labour protection back to a place of privilege in the conception of the rights of citizenship and to build bridges between the demands of workers in both North and South.

Yves Hallée looks at the question of citizenship at work in terms of identity. He is interested in how dominant values shape the construction of social identities and, in particular, how they affect our recognition of women. Citizenship was, of course, constructed in reference to male roles; women were simply excluded from the equation. More current approaches offer three understandings of the role of women in society: first, a citizenship which is gender neutral, focused on the formal equality of rights and duties between men and women, and tending to ignore both a history of subordination of women and the resultant insufficiency of opportunity; second, a gendered citizenship, which is focused on values traditionally recognized as women's values, such as the ethics of solicitude and care; and, finally, a pluralist citizenship in which gender is just one avenue of analysis (as are age, social status, health, sexuality, etc.) in the construction of social identities. From this latter perspective and in relation to the question of pay equity, Hallée believes that the wage discrimination experienced by women is the result of the lesser value ascribed to caring work. He therefore makes a plea for a feminization of men's work in order that pay equity and the spread of the value of care giving and of compassion associated with women's work be given full economic and social recognition.

Georgina Murray suggests that the notion of citizenship at work can provide guiding principles to public and private policies about work. Its ability to do so, however, will depend on the legitimacy accorded to the idea of citizenship at work, notably by public decision makers. Murray's analysis leads inevitably to the conclusion that the potential for real citizenship at work is necessarily limited in a capitalist economy characterized by neo-liberalism and class politics. Her historical investigation of the different schools of thought in classical political economy suggests how such thinking places limits on the possibilities of citizenship. Whether in terms of the original theories of liberalism or their radicalization under neo-liberalism, all subscribe to the reduction of labour costs and the increase of productivity. In contrast to these liberal interpretations, John Maynard Keynes highlighted the importance of the social state, whereas Marxist critics have tended to point to the limits of social democracy in a capitalist economy. For Murray, it is clear that the underlying inequalities at the core of liberal political

economy are in conflict with the egalitarian aspirations of citizenship at work. Her analysis points to the need to look beyond national frontiers in a global economy. Citizenship in one country is unlikely to prevail in the current context and it is therefore necessary to think in terms of a global citizenship. This should be carried forward by workers movements seeking a range of economic rights for all citizens. The notion of citizenship at work would then assume its veritable meaning.

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While this brief overview of the contributions to this special issue on citizenship at work certainly underscores a diversity of approaches, we also believe that there are a number of common themes that need to be highlighted.

First, and irrespective of foolish occupational temptation on the part of people who study work and employment as a profession to want to construct coherence in the face of chaos, there is clearly in all of these contributions a search for a more comprehensive and articulated account of life at work. Citizenship at work potentially offers such coherence, though its multiple meanings and epistemological pluralism certainly give rise to caution and the increased need for rigueur in taking up this challenge.

Second, part of this search stems from the increasing disconnect between traditional models of work and their institutionalized policy frameworks on the one hand and the many changes in the world of work on the other hand. This is all the more so because so many jobs seem to be getting worse, characterized by chronic insecurity and alienation from the fruits of human agency in work (see, for example, Green, 2006), while other jobs just keep getting better, as manifested by the ability of some workplaces to attain higher degrees of organizational citizenships of all sorts. Faced with this increasing dispersion, national policy frameworks are fractured and unable to capture adequately either end of the spectrum.

Third, above and beyond the specific characteristics of these jobs, there is a need for an overarching narrative that also takes account of the characteristics of the persons likely to occupy these jobs, not least because the notion of job might just as well extend to reproductive and caring work as to firing the engines of competitive performance in key international industries. This suggests the need for new articulations between different kinds of identities: individual and collective, North and South, productive and reproductive, and men and women in different phases of their life cycles, to name just a few of these identities at play. This further raises the complex interplay between individualism and collectivism, between the individual and the group and also between status and identity; just as

it commends us to think further about the legal and policy instruments designed to confer status and recognize identity.

Fourth, one cannot but be struck by the immense gaps between the aspirational horizons of transnational citizenship as per a transcendent narrative of decent work (World Commission, 2004) versus, as is so elegantly illustrated by the text of Arteaga in this issue, the deep paradoxes of the illegal Mexican worker in the United States working below minimum standards and unable to access minimal rights at work in the country of origin and in the country of adoption. This gap between aspiration and reality will continue to act as a motor for thinking about the perils and potentialities of citizenship at work and also the transformative potential of citizenship as a unifying project (see also Johnston, 2000).

Fifth, there is a palpable need for policy accounts that seek to build bridges between these gaps, fragmentations and tensions. All the contributors appear to agree that blind faith in the market is unlikely to lead to a fuller realization of citizenship at work. All would seem to point to the need to reconstruct some policy coherence. Yet, none really suggest that it is possible to return to points of departure as we have known them, be they in yearning for a nostalgic reconstitution of collective labour law or the reinvention of the Welfare State, not least because of significant changes in the organization of work and their relations to larger socio-economic trends.

Sixth, one of the more telling conclusions emerging from the texts in this special issue concerns the negotiated character of citizenship at work. This is, of course, a core insight of the vision of work as a continuous process of regulation. Globalization might thus be construed as a series of opportunities for reregulating both work and its processes of regulation (Murray, Lévesque and Vallée, 2000). This highlights the need to study these ongoing processes in a variety of ways. It also points to the importance of traditional and emerging social actors. Citizenship provides one avenue of analysis for the complex re-regulation of working lives and it is also to be understood as both a work in progress and a transformative narrative for social actors seeking to bring about change at work.

Last, but not least, the veritable conceptual emporium that is this special issue of *RI/IR* merits closer scrutiny and invites other contributors. Since this introduction barely scratches the surface, we can only commend our readers to partake of the varied and challenging contributions that follow. In so doing, we can only hope to renew at least some of the analytical challenges set out so presciently by Harry Arthurs' 1967 invitation to think about the larger dimensions of work in society and to bring the workplace and working lives into the realm of citizenship.

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